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By Dana Milbank

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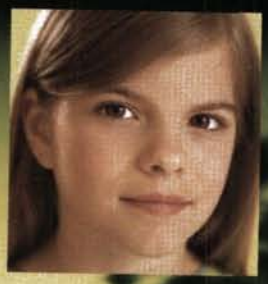

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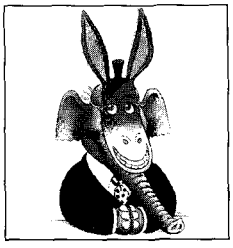

Cover by Eric Baker for THE NEW REPUBLIC. Illustration by Robert Grossman. Article on page 21.

4 **CORRESPONDENCE** Two debates about Israeli history, communism in America, &c.

6 **NURITH C. AIZENMAN** TRB: BAD BAN Why is the anti-abortion lobby going after organizations that have dramatically reduced abortions worldwide?

9 **THE EDITORS** BARRY BOWS OUT Washington, D.C.'s mayor bids an overdue adieu. NOTEBOOK Surplus scares, DeLay tactics, &c.

11 **JEAN BETHKE ELSHTAIN** THE HARD QUESTIONS: THE RIGHT RIGHTS Fighting for universal human rights is indeed judgmental but also necessary.

12 **DAVID GRANN** ON THE HILL: TALKED TO DEATH The Republicans pull out a new weapon to kill campaign finance reform: democracy.

13 **MARK FRANCIS COHEN** TRENTON POSTCARD: PEOPLE'S PREP New Jersey brings some Exeter-style education to the inner city—and, lo and behold, it works.

16 **MARGOT COHEN** UNSILENCED Indonesia's long-repressed citizens recover their voices.

18 **ADRIAN WOOLDRIDGE** A TRUE TEST Critics say the SAT puts minorities at a disadvantage in college admissions, but without it those groups would do even worse.

21 **DANA MILBANK** PARTY CRASHERS If you believe in the balanced budget amendment, school prayer, and capital punishment—and if you oppose abortion rights and the minimum wage—then the Democratic Party wants you to run for Congress.

26 **STANLEY KAUFFMANN** ON FILMS: PILGRIM'S PROGRESS Montana's big skies overwhelm a formulaic plot in *The Horse Whisperer*.

27 **JACKSON LEARS** THE MOUSE THAT ROARED *The Magic Kingdom: Walt Disney and the American Way of Life* by Steven Watts

34 **HELEN VENDLER** POETICAL CORRECTNESS *World Poetry: An Anthology of Verse from Antiquity to Our Time* edited by Katharine Washburn and John S. Major

37 **MICHAEL RAVITCH** THE PEN AND THE MASK *Stendhal* by Jonathan Keates

40 **ROBERT PINSKY** POEM *A Phonebook Cover Hermes of the Nineteen-Forties*

42 **MARTIN PERETZ** CAMBRIDGE DIARIST: HABIBIE'S HOUR

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CORRESPONDENCE

Money isn't everything

To the editors:

As a former political reporter who covered Jane Harman during her first three years in Congress, I feel compelled to counter some of the cynicism and one-sidedness of Peter Beinart's piece ("Dollar Democrats," May 11). For example, Beinart states that Harman first won office in 1992 "because she spent $2.3 million...." Then Beinart insists that "those same forces, personal wealth and public disregard for (elective) experience ... have helped make Harman a strong candidate for governor." He doesn't bother to mention other forces that make Harman a strong candidate—for instance that she has made a reputation in her district, even among Republicans, as smart, hardworking, centrist in her views, and able to use her Washington connections to benefit the South Bay.

Beinart also writes, "The new candidates are often called outsiders because they are relative newcomers to elective office. But, in reality, they are not new to the political process at all." But by whom are the candidates "often called" outsiders? When I covered Harman, she never claimed to be an outsider. In fact, her '92 campaign boasted that her Washington experience and connections would be an asset to the district.

KATHLEEN DOUGHERTY COMPTON
Crescent City, California

To the editors:

I am a bit reluctant to join Peter Beinart in celebrating Gray Davis's political martyrdom. Granted, Al Checchi and Hurricane Jane Harman have run truly vacuous campaigns. But the *only* distinction Davis has to offer the California electorate is that he has no personal money. How has Davis focused his detailed discussions of legislative process? By calling for expanded sentences for drug dealers and more death penalty. How innovative.

KEVIN ARNOVITZ
Los Angeles, California

Deir Yassin revisited

To the editors:

Martin Peretz ("Jubilee!" May 11) refers to the Jewish soldiers' treatment of Arabs in the village of Deir Yassin, near Jerusalem, in April 1948 as an "atrocity." There is new eyewitness information concerning Deir Yassin that discredits the claim of atrocities. In a BBC television program, Harem Nusseibeh, an editor of the Palestine Broadcasting Service's Arabic news in 1948, describes a meeting that took place in Jerusalem immediately after the battle in Deir Yassin. The participants in the meeting were Deir Yassin residents and Palestinian Arab leaders, including Dr. Hussein Khalidi. "I asked Dr. Khalidi how we should cover the story," recalled Nusseibeh. "He said, 'We must make the most of this.' So we wrote a press release stating that at Deir Yassin children were murdered, pregnant women were raped. All sorts of atrocities." The BBC program also features Abu Mahmud, who was a Deir Yassin resident in 1948 and who says that the villagers protested against the atrocity claims: "We said, 'There was no rape.' [Khalidi] said, 'We have to say this, so the Arab armies will come to liberate Palestine from the Jews.'"

Khalidi's claims about Jewish atrocities in Deir Yassin were quoted extensively in the international media at the time and for the past 50 years have been widely reprinted and cited as proof of the massacre.

In 1969, the Israeli Foreign Ministry, under Abba Eban, reexamined the Deir Yassin controversy and confirmed, "This was no massacre of an unarmed, peaceful village population by a military unit as Arab propaganda pretends...." The Israeli report characterized the massacre claim as a "fairy tale" and a "big lie."

MORTON A. KLEIN
National President
Zionist Organization of America
New York, New York

To the editors:

There were no atrocities at Deir Yassin in 1948. I know because I was there.

The Arab village of Deir Yassin was being used by Arab terrorist forces as a launching pad for attacks on Jewish vehicles using the nearby road to Jerusalem during the 1948 war of independence. Deir Yassin was a legitimate military target. I was a member of the Irgun Zvai Leumi unit sent to capture Deir Yassin in April 1948. We were so anxious to avoid Arab civilian casualties that we even forfeited the element of surprise and sent ahead a truck with a loudspeaker to warn the villagers, in Arabic, that a battle would shortly ensue. More than 200 of the villagers fled. During the subsequent house-to-house fighting between the Jewish forces and the heavily armed Arab terrorists, some civilians lost their lives—because the Arab forces prevented them from leaving, in the hope that their presence would deter the Jewish soldiers, just as the PLO would later do in Lebanon, in 1982.

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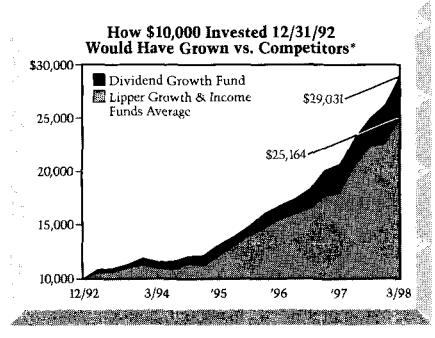

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But Arab lies can't change the historical truth: There was no massacre; there were no atrocities, no "indiscriminate killings" of Arabs in Deir Yassin. It never happened.

SAMUEL SCHACHTER
Coral Springs, Florida

A lesser evil

To the editors:

I do not quarrel with Ronald Radosh's claim that the Soviet leadership controlled all major policy decisions of the American Communist Party and that the party often acted badly enough to earn the distrust of the democratic left ("The Two Evils," May 11). But this does not justify the totally negative picture that he paints of the party and of its members.

Even if the top leadership was mainly motivated by the Soviet line, much of the rank and file was attracted to the vigorous support the party sometimes gave to progressive American causes such as labor organizing and civil rights.

My parents, for example, joined the Communist Party in the 1930s and quit after the Hungarian Revolt and John Gates's attempt to reform the party had failed. They developed a clear understanding of the failures and crimes of the Soviet system and readily admitted that they had been very wrong to defend the Soviet Union. Yet they were proud of most of what they and the party had done in domestic affairs.

STAN KAPLOWITZ
Via the Internet

Sternhell replies

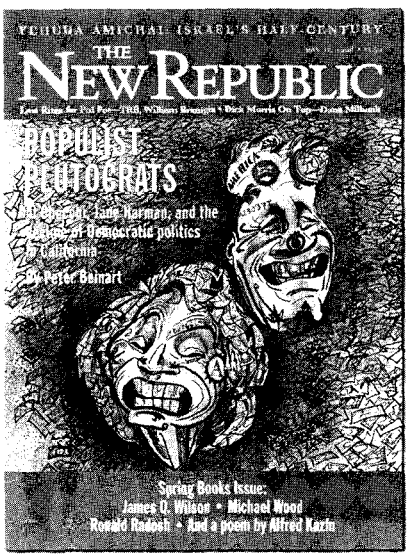
To the editors:

I was amused by Steven J. Zipperstein's review of my *Founding Myths of Israel* ("Eyeless in Zion," May 4). It is difficult to quote in a single letter, limited to a few hundred words, all the inaccuracies, altered information, lies, and half-lies that adorn this piece. However, out of respect for TNR's readers, let me try to explain once again to Mr. Zipperstein the central arguments of my book.

This book is a product of curiosity. First of all, I wanted to understand why a society that was supposed to have been created by socialist, secular, and humanist elites has no constitution, no bill of rights, and developed more on the basis of history, culture, and religion than on the basis of rationalism, individualism, and genuine secularism.

Second, I wanted to comprehend why, after close to half a century of Labor dominance, Israeli society of 1977, the year of Labor's fall from power, was no more just and egalitarian than old bourgeois societies, while its social policies lagged far behind those of Western Europe. Why did Israel not have any real social policies until the revolt of the Black Panthers in the early 1970s? Why was secondary education an expensive luxury? Why couldn't the socialists in power work out a genuine policy of social assistance that could have assured the underprivileged a decent standard of living?

Third, I wanted to understand the reasons for the moral, intellectual, and political paralysis of the Israeli ruling elites, with the founders firmly at the helm, in the years following the Six Day War: Why did Israel sink into occupation, colonization, and denial of basic human rights of the Palestinians? After all, if the territories were simply supposed to be exchanged for peace, why was it necessary, under successive Labor governments, to


YEHUDA AMICHAI ISRAEL'S HALF-CENTURY
THE NEW REPUBLIC
ELITIST PLUTOCRATS
Spring Books Issue:
James Q. Wilson • Michael Wood
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start Jewish settlements on the West Bank and in the Golan Heights? Why was it indispensable to start the process of annexation of the Jordan Valley and building the town of Kiryat Arba on Hebron's outskirts? Why wasn't Labor until 1993 capable of recognizing the rights of the Palestinians to independence?

The first, if not the biggest of Zipperstein's misrepresentations, probably based on ignorance of concepts widely used in the first half of our century in Europe as well as in Palestine, is his claim that I seek "to tarnish Labor Zionism with nothing less than protofascism." In the Zionist context, it was Chaim Arlosoroff, the most gifted and one of the most influential Labor intellectuals, extensively quoted by me but not even mentioned by Zipperstein, who in 1919 defined the essence of nationalist socialism in Palestine: "Jewish socialism has to be clearly and unequivocally national," wrote Arlosoroff in his celebrated book, *Der Jüdische Volkssozialismus*, because "our nationalism is a nationalism of the hungry.... [F]or all of us, the entire people are, nationally speaking, proletarians." He assailed "social democracy for using class incitement and class warfare as a terrible instrument of propaganda"; this was a classical nationalist-socialist position and the essence of "constructive socialism," the pillar of Labor's ideology.

In constructive socialism, socialism was subordinate to national requirements and was free from most of the ideological principles to which social democracy adhered. The bottom line is that Zionism was just another nationalism, not worse but in some respects not much better than most other nationalisms, and the founders were, in Ben Gurion's words, "conquerors of the land facing an iron wall" and not prophets of social change. But pretending, as Zipperstein does, that in my book I write that, for the founders, the kibbutzim were "marginal, economically irrelevant enterprises... whose egalitarianism they really deplore[d]" is no more than a breathtaking lie (only comparable in its absurdity and cold falsehood to his accusation that I describe the Ben Gurion regime as a "living hell"). Here is what I write in *The Founding Myths*: "The founders would have been pleased to realize an egalitarian society [in the whole country] had there been no contradiction between socialism and nationalism. But this contradiction was insurmountable."

Finally, there is no "mystery" in my analysis of the events that first prevented any possibility of peace and subsequently made possible the Oslo accords. The reason is that it took Yitzhak Rabin 20 years to realize that Israel would not be able to eliminate the Palestinian national movement and six years to understand that we will not be able—in his own words—to "break the bones" of Palestinian stone-throwers and put an end to the intifada that started in December 1987.

ZEEV STERNHELL
Wassenaar, The Netherlands

Steven J. Zipperstein replies:

I can sympathize with why Zeev Sternhell wishes to disassociate himself from the arguments made in his own book. I cite its text extensively because the case it makes for the protofascistic foundations of pre-state Israel seems, at first glance, just too silly to attribute to a trained scholar. Something of the book's episodic, meandering tone is captured in Sternhell's letter, where he insists that his goal is to analyze the "paralysis" of the post-1967 Israeli elite. Actually, its thesis is precisely the opposite: That this isn't the product of moral paralysis but rather that the problems facing Israel since the Six Day War were all the logical outcome of

continued on page 41

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FROM WASHINGTON

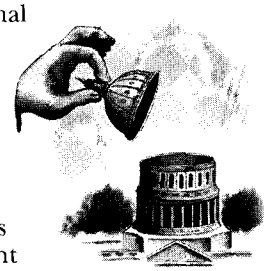
Bad ban

In 1990 abortion was the predominant method of birth control for most Russian women. Contraceptives were not widely available; according to the Ministry of Health, only 19 percent of Russian women used them. But, like their American counterparts, Russian women did not want (and often could not afford) enormous families. So, in any given year, 109 out of every 1,000 had an abortion—one of the highest rates in the world.

Then, in 1991, an affiliate of the International Planned Parenthood Federation set up shop. Today it has over 50 branches across Russia. Thanks in large measure to IPPF's efforts, by 1994, 24 percent of Russian women were using contraception, and the abortion rate had declined by 30 percent—resulting in a net decrease of 800,000 abortions per year between 1990 and 1994.

You might think that American pro-life activists would be ecstatic at this news—and that they would be falling over themselves to demand increased U.S. funding for IPPF and other family-planning organizations. After all, family planning has had similar successes in places as varied as Chile, Kazakhstan, and South Korea.

Instead, the pro-life crowd has branded International Planned Parenthood Federation public enemy number one. That's because, although IPPF insists its "primary role is ensuring the availability of safe and effective contraception," and it spends less than one-half of one percent of its funds on abortion-related activities, the group unabashedly supports a woman's right to choose.



Representative Chris Smith, a New Jersey Republican who is co-chairman of the House Pro-Life Caucus, has made it his personal mission to cut off all U.S. funding for IPPF and like-minded groups. Smith's crusade kicked into full gear in 1993, when newly elected President Clinton revoked a long-standing executive order—known as the Mexico City policy, after the city where the Reagan administration first unveiled it in 1984—that had banned U.S. assistance to overseas groups that perform abortions or actively promote abortion as a method of family planning. Smith has been intent on getting Congress to reinstate the Mexico City policy ever since.

Last month, Smith finally succeeded when Congress approved Mexico City-like language that he had attached to a State Department appropriations bill. Although the bill would accomplish several key Clinton objectives—like paying off $926 million in back dues to the U.N.—the president has vowed to veto it because of the abortion language. Since Congress lacks enough votes to override Clinton's veto, the bill is presumably DOA. However, Smith will likely reintroduce his abortion language into at least one of several appropriations bills up for consideration next month. Vetoing those bills could mean shutting down the government all over again—something Clinton might not have the leeway to do—and so Smith's measure may not be so dead after all.

Even if you're against abortion, though, the implications of Smith's proposal should disturb you. The first provision would prohibit the government from even indirectly funding any organizations, excluding foreign governments, unless they agree not to perform abortions except when a mother's life is in danger or in cases of "forcible rape or incest." The second would prohibit U.S. funding of any group that engages "in any activity or effort to alter the laws or governmental policies of any foreign country concerning the circumstances under which abortion is permitted, regulated, or prohibited."

Smith insists that neither of these provisions would preclude the funding of family planning. Any group that is interested in providing family planning without providing abortions or lobbying to change abortion laws is still eligible for assistance, and, Smith argues, plenty of such groups exist. Back in the days of the Mexico City policy, says Smith's spokesman Ken Wolfe, "nearly 400 organizations got money for family-planning activities. There were more vendors than grants available."

But officials at the United States Agency for International Development, the agency that administers the funding, maintain that Smith's comparison is misleading. During the Reagan and

continued on page 41

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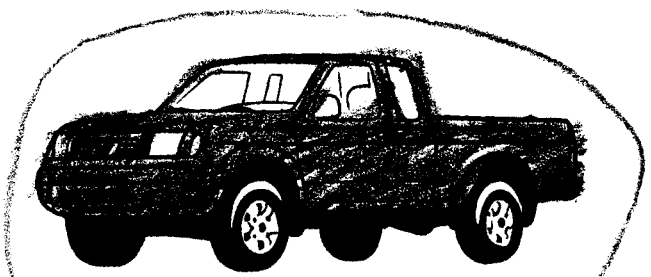

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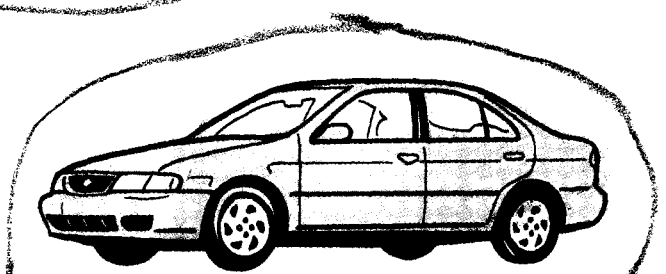

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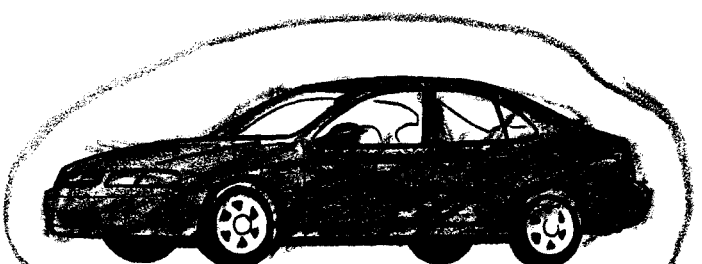

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"Richard Rorty [is] John Dewey's ablest intellectual heir and one of the most influential philosophers alive...In lively prose, [he] offers a pointed and necessary reminder that left academics have too often been content to talk to each other about the theory of hegemony while the right has been busy with the practice of it. If those criticized in the book dismiss it the way they brush aside the Blooms and D'Souzas of the world, an opportunity will be lost. Rorty invites a serious conversation about the purposes of intellectual work and the direction of left politics. I wouldn't want him to have the last word, but the conversation should be joined. If it is conducted with the verve of *Achieving Our Country*, and if it shares Rorty's genuine commitment to revitalizing the left as a national force, it will be a very good thing."
—Mark Reinhardt, THE NATION

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

JUNE 15, 1998

BARRY BOWS OUT

Nobody wants to kick a man when he's down. Even *The Washington Post*, which had lately adopted a skeptical tone toward Mayor Marion Barry, grew soft after he announced he would not run for a fifth term as titular head of the nation's capital. The final days before his announcement, the paper reported, were a river of tears and prayer. The Reverend Willie Wilson lowered his eyes to lead a round of amens. Barry's wife Cora spent some quality time with "Touched by an Angel," one of her favorite television shows. And, in the end, the headline announced, "PRIVATE LIFE WON OUT"—he left, in other words, to spend more time with his family. Frustrated friends and advisers, who had been cajoling the mayor for months to step down, were overcome with gratitude, so they held their tongues.

For all those inclined toward a similarly generous consideration of the departing mayor's career, we urge you to resist. Better yet, pay a visit to the city he has governed for all but four of the last 20 years—and not to the touristy sections. Stop by a local public school in Southeast Washington, aerated in these warm spring months by broken windows, emptied of students who have about as much chance of graduating as not. Take in the aroma of rotting garbage, especially pungent in a heat wave; by the end of your five-day visit you might even go native and grow used to the smell. Stop and chat with a local police officer, who may tell you that his siren hasn't worked in years, that he's had to pay to fix his own flat tire, or that he, too, is praying—for a police department in the suburbs to give him a job. And, whatever you do, don't get hurt. Should you need an ambulance, may God help you—because dialing 911 may not. Eventually, an ambulance will arrive, but don't hold your breath.

Like most political bosses, Barry's own legacy is so enmeshed with the city's fate that the line between Washington's history and his biography is not always easy to draw. Barry has dragged the city with him through each phase of his self-destruction, recovery, relapse, and—hallelujah!—rejuvenation. Barry likes to say his critics will blame him for every gunshot, even every snowstorm. And he likes to respond by naming a child he put in a summer jobs program or a neighborhood he's revived. In these late days of nostalgia, he's even apt to grow florid and sentimental, recalling the days before the fall when he was part of a "brave band of young people who risked our lives . . . to bring relief to some of the most oppressing conditions."

True, it's difficult to remember the heady days when Barry first took office in 1978, when he energized the city with his plans for reform, when the best and the brightest of America's black professionals flocked to his administration. But the point is that it's difficult to remember because his shining moments were so long ago and are now a dull and hazy blur. "It's like going out into a field and seeing an old rusting-out hulk of a car and trying to imagine what it was like when it was brand new," Sam Smith, editor of the *Progressive Review*, who's covered Barry since the '60s, told the *Post*.

Just about all of Barry's accomplishments are tainted by their disastrous, even if unintended, consequences. You can forgive the idealist for choosing to become a machine-style mayor, because that's what most of the earliest black mayors did in the '80s. Like the Irish pols who came before them, they liberally doled out government jobs to their own friends, the cities' then-disenfranchised African Americans. Such generosity, after all, contributed to the establishment of a black middle class.

You can not forgive Barry, however, for patronizing the middle class at the expense of the poor. One example demonstrates his pattern. When Barry first took office, he turned over the contract for school supplies to one of his cronies. Overnight, the price of a carton of cereal supplied to the school cafeteria rose from $8 to $13.50, and his crony entered the ranks of the middle class. The schools' chief at the time pleaded with Barry to renege on the contract. I care about the children, Barry would say, and then ignored the complaints. After hundreds of such contracts and his famously loose accounting, Barry ruined the schools, the hospitals, the police department, even the city morgue, leaving a trail of felons in his wake. Friends, aides, and an ex-wife have all done time after serving in Barry's era of temptation. Eventually, as city services crumbled under the incompetence and as the murder rate soared, the middle class he'd created abandoned him and fled to the suburbs in terror.

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In the next few weeks of mythmaking, Barry's role in the "brave band of young people" will no doubt be trotted out again and again. Assume, for the sake of argument, that you believed in his Black Power rhetoric and in his pivotal role in the civil rights movement. Whatever the words once meant, they curdled into tin pot demagoguery over two decades of Barry's rule. As Barry began to lose the white support he once had, he relied more on convincing his poor black voters that he, like them, was a victim of the racist white power structure. Long after the civil rights mayors of his generation had given up, Barry kept up the Stokely Carmichael act, feeding false hope to the most vulnerable of his loyal followers.

Though he flirted with the city for months, Barry's decision not to run again is not surprising. When Congress stripped the mayor of most of his powers in 1995, it left him with a shell of a job. In his speech, he spoke often of the "mean-spirited Republican Congress." Whatever you think of my record, he said, "nothing can be of a higher order than freedom and justice and democracy."

Hints of Barry's usual demagoguery are there, but he's not completely wrong. Now that Barry's no longer running, the Republican Congress needs to sort out its confusion over the difference between this mayor and the mayor's office. Lauch Faircloth, the North Carolina Senator who stripped Barry of most of his powers, said Barry's successor should have an easier time shaking off Congress's grip. But that shouldn't be Faircloth's decision to make. Barry may have triggered the bizarre overlord power structure, but the city deserves better. We bid him farewell and wish our next mayor the best of luck—both in dealing with Senator Faircloth and in dealing with the urban ruin that Barry wrought. •

NOTEBOOK

SURPLUS SCARE: In the short duration of its existence, Americans have generally come to regard the budget surplus as a good thing. And, when the White House announced on May 26 that the budget surplus was once again exceeding previous expectations, it was hard to find the downside. But Bill Archer, chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, did. "Because of record-high taxation," he declared, "the surplus is surging out of control." *Out of control?* Archer did not specify the horrors that might ensue from an unchecked budget surplus rampaging, Godzilla-like, through the economy. The grotesque withering of our national debt? Wanton availability of capital for private investment? But he proposed to stave them off by cutting taxes. Granted, Archer's remedy is not surprising. The interesting thing is that he attributed the budget surplus to "record-high taxation." In 1993, Republicans predicted that President Clinton's tax hike would fail, by crippling the economy and reducing tax revenues. (Solution: Cut taxes.) Now, Archer says that taxes have indeed boosted tax revenues. But this, too, has become proof of the tax hike's failure. Surging budget surpluses! Evacuate the children!

DELAY TACTIC: House Majority Whip Tom DeLay has never shown much love for his Democratic colleagues. Since Republicans took over the Congress, the former exterminator has lobbied to impeach liberal judges and repeal even the mildest environmental regulations. So we had to check twice when we learned that DeLay promised to introduce a constitutional amendment on campaign finance reform that would allow *tougher* regulations on campaign spending and contributions—an amendment drafted by none other than his Democratic nemesis, Dick Gephardt. Has the Texas Republican undergone a change of heart? Has he read too many of TNR's "Fund-raising Piety Watches"? Not quite. It turns out he just wants to bring up the amendment to denounce it, as well as all the other Democratic proposals. Now that's free speech!

UNSCOM WATCH, VI: The next battle over United Nations weapons inspections will be fought this week in New York. Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammed Said al-Sahaf, leading a delegation of Iraqi "weapons experts," will once again argue that, after completing more than 4,000 inspections and all but usurping Iraq's sovereignty, UNSCOM has failed to prove that Iraq is stockpiling weapons of mass destruction—thus warranting an end to sanctions. It's unclear whether Iraq will get its way, but Saddam has already won a victory of sorts over UNSCOM. On June 3, lead inspector Richard Butler—long frustrated by Iraq's ability to move and hide weapons of mass destruction—will appear before the Security Council and try a new strategy. He will reveal everything UNSCOM knows about existing weapons (based on satellite images, declassified intelligence, and so on) and ask the Iraqis to turn over the weapons or prove that they no longer exist. Once they do so, they'll be off the hook for sanctions. The problem with this strategy, of course, is that UNSCOM surely doesn't know about all the weapons Iraq possesses—so there's a chance they might get to keep plenty. Who's to blame for this new strategy? The U.N. Security Council members undercutting UNSCOM's efforts, such as Russia, which recently forced Butler to appoint a Russian "political adviser" to his team. Even the U.S. seems content to let the inspection regime meander quietly along. President Clinton's last word on the matter was that he was "encouraged" by Iraq's cooperation; this week he sent another signal about the administration's disposition by recalling more than 20,000 U.S. soldiers from the Gulf. It now seems less likely than ever that sanctions and regular UNSCOM inspections will survive the October Security Council vote. And what about that other minor detail, nuclear inspections? They have

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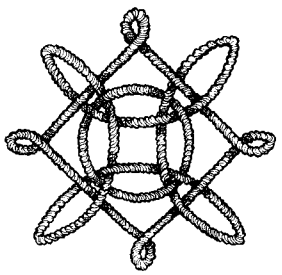
been all but abandoned. The International Atomic Energy Agency, the organization in charge of dismantling Iraq's nuclear weapons program, has essentially declared Iraq to be nuke-free—even though Iraq's sophisticated efforts to hide these weapons have been well-chronicled. Consider a recent report from *Jane's Intelligence Review.* After the Gulf war, according to security expert David Albright, "materials that might have revealed the extent of [Saddam's] nuclear weapons program ... were boxed up and hidden in underground bunkers or even in private homes." *Jane's* adds: "Some ... were placed in a freight car which was welded shut and then sent off to travel continuously up and down the national railway grid." •

THE HARD QUESTIONS

THE RIGHT RIGHTS

By Jean Bethke Elshtain

Consider an oddity of the current cultural moment. We have simultaneously become voluptuaries of "difference" and ardent advocates of "human rights." Difference means respecting the variety of individuals and their cultures, or subcultures, or even multiple universes of the one and only unique "me." In some cases, we extend this so far that just the merest hint of criticism of one who is "different" becomes an occasion for alarm and much hand-wringing over "judgmentalism." The assumption, apparently, is that, if we just let difference "be," thousands of flowers, sans a single noxious weed, will bloom.



At the same time, we are quite capable of getting worked up when we learn that "human rights" are being violated in far-away places. To be sure, we may be a bit selective in our ranking of what counts as a human rights violation worth getting worked up about. Almost everyone would rank genocide as an assault on human rights. Whether we can intervene effectively to stop genocidal action by one state or people against another state or people is a different question. But we want, and expect, our own government, together with the international human rights organizations, to condemn genocide whenever and wherever it occurs. Many other violations may cross the threshold of concern and we cry: "This must not stand!"

To observe that celebrations of difference and a strong proclamation of universally valid norms of human rights exist in some tension with one another is to belabor the obvious. So the question is: How do we think our way through this dilemma? For, if any cultural differences are indeed deep and irreducible, then to condemn a set of norms and practices of a society that is not one's own would be to practice cultural imperialism and ugly hegemony of the sort that makes us wary and triggers an automatic, negative response. And, if universal human rights is simply superficial—in other words, if it is simply the way many individuals and whole societies have come to talk about what they support—then there is no compelling reason for societies that don't "talk that way" to pay the slightest attention. You have your norms. I have mine. And that's that.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, whose fiftieth anniversary is being celebrated this year, settled this matter decisively in favor of strong universals. The document doesn't shy away from making claims about human persons and the dignity of such persons. Rereading the declaration is, therefore, bound to set any cultural relativist's teeth on edge, for, according to the declaration, it is our very humanness that comes first and goes all the way down to the roots. Particular cultures and societies are so many diverse homes, in a manner of speaking, in which our human identities unfold and take on distinct shape and even divide up. But, at best, we are more alike than different. Recognizing this fact alone gives support to, and validation of, efforts to build an international human rights regime.

What often goes unrecognized is the fact that this cluster of assumptions puts tremendous pressure on one of the ways we in the West, especially in the United States, have come to understand rights. At one point, the natural law backdrop, heavily laced with biblical and theological language and understanding, prevailed. The working assumption was that persons were not creatures of the state, that political orders emerged to serve persons who came to know certain goods as rights as they lived out their lives in particular communities. None of this was construed as arbitrary. To the contrary: It was believed to reflect an order built into things as they really are.

But, over time, a strongly nominalist tinge, heavily indebted to Thomas Hobbes, crept in. Human beings, in this scheme of things, are bundles of desires. We are compelled to act out these desires; hence, propelled into agonistic relations with one another. Over time, our focus on multiple desires that divide us—rather than qualities that unite us—led us to create rights. If unbounded rights clash, it is war. So we need protection from one another; enter Leviathan, a power sufficiently overpowering that we are obliged to restrain ourselves. What we are at the deepest level is free—which, in the Hobbesian scheme of things, signifies no deep normative vision of human ideals and purposes. No, freedom is just unimpeded motion that necessarily clashes with those other objects in motion we call human beings. Any reference to the good of human beings in community is rendered superficial blather.

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Those who wrote the Universal Declaration of Human Rights created an explicitly anti-Hobbesian document, one that is bound to sound like universalistic (and, yes, judgmental) cant to those who are suspicious of any and all appeals to general human norms. But if rights emerge from the arbitrariness of our entirely selfish desires—if rights are just the conventional ways we have devised to stop people from killing one another—any and all efforts to build up a thick, sturdy regime of international human rights is either folly or downright illegitimate. It follows that governments "give" rights and can easily take them away, for all that human beings consist of, in the end, are desires—which brings us back full circle to the paradox with which I began.

In our understandable desire to be more appreciative of, and sensitive to, cultural differences, we may be undermining the sustainability over time of our commitment to human rights—rights that are, by definition, part of our inheritance as creatures whose dignity is given and is not to be violated. This yields, in practice, a complex orientation toward the truths of universal norms and aspirations as well as the many plural ways human beings have devised to live out their lives with and among one another. •

ON THE HILL

TALKED TO DEATH

By David Grann

Last month, faced with a deluge of negative publicity and an internal rebellion over campaign finance reform, House Speaker Newt Gingrich called an urgent meeting with those Republicans who could best outwit the opposition: three former Democrats. Sitting in his office on the second floor of the Capitol, the speaker asked the trio of party-switchers—Billy Tauzin, Nathan Deal, and Mike Parker—what would happen if he continued to block legislation overhauling the way campaigns were paid for.

There'd be turmoil, Tauzin explained.

We'd lose parliamentary control to the Democrats, Deal added.

It was then that Parker, a Mississippi mortician who had once taunted Democratic leaders by daring them to throw him out of their caucus, suggested an alternative plan: Open the issue to unlimited debate. "Let democracy work its will," he drawled.

Gingrich, as he likes to say, listened and learned. Twenty-four hours later, the House leadership abruptly reversed course and promised the most open debate in the history of campaign finance reform—every proposal, no matter how controversial, would reach the floor for a vote in June. At the time, it seemed like complete capitulation; House Democratic leader Dick Gephardt crowed that reform had survived Republicans' best efforts to "drive a stake through its heart." But, in fact, GOP leaders had merely adopted the same sort of strategy that Democrats had perfected during their 40 years in the majority: killing popular reforms with endless, chaotic discussion. "We tried squelching it first," explains Ray LaHood, an Illinois Republican. "Now we're trying to talk it to death."

So far it's working. Last week, so many members and aides from both parties crowded into the tiny Rules Committee room (where the formal terms of debate are established) that many others had to wait in the corridor. After hours of testimony on every kind of campaign loophole, the chairman, Gerald Solomon of New York, pleaded with his colleagues to cut short their opening remarks. "This could drag out all summer," fretted Connecticut Republican Chris Shays, coauthor of the House counterpart to the Senate's McCain-Feingold bill.

By the end of the day, there were eleven main proposals, including one that would increase contribution limits for individuals and political action committees as well as one that would repeal them altogether. Then came the amendments. Before lawmakers left for the May recess, there were an unprecedented 586—more than one for every member of the House.

The glut was no accident. GOP aides had worked late into the evening, mixing up a variety of potential "poison pills"—politically charged provisions that could be inserted into a popular reform bill at the last minute to ultimately kill it. To Democrats, the most poisonous was the "paycheck protection" act—a conservative proposal that would force labor unions to get consent from their members before spending their dues on political campaigns. Most Democrats, their coffers flush with union contributions, have vowed never to swallow such medicine, even if it means sacrificing broader reforms.

Meanwhile, an eclectic coalition, including the American Civil Liberties Union and the National Right to Life Committee, launched its own lobbying effort to squelch reform, warning that curtailing campaign contributions was tantamount to curtailing free speech. A similar push had suffocated the McCain-Feingold bill in the Senate only a few months earlier.

But the real threat, as Gingrich anticipated, was not from constitutional purists, or even from corporate CEOs and party bosses who flourish under the current system of legalized influence-peddling. Rather, it was from reformers themselves. Indeed, democracy had accomplished what Gingrich's initial strong-arm tactics could not: It pitted reformers against one another.

Among the dozens of mini-camps were two main warring ones: call them the Lites and the Heavies. The Heavies, comprised mostly of Democrats, supported the

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Shays-Meehan bill, which would ban the millions of unregulated dollars flowing into party coffers (soft money) and tighten the rules governing independent expenditures (issue ads). The Lites, with more Republicans among their ranks, endorsed the so-called "freshman" bill, which still allowed soft money on the state level and imposed less stringent restrictions on outside ads. The reason, said its coauthors, Republican Asa Hutchinson of Arkansas and Democrat Tom Allen of Maine, was both political and constitutional: They didn't think that anything stronger could get through the GOP-controlled Congress or past the Supreme Court, which had already overturned laws establishing spending limits.

Though the differences between the Heavies and the Lites were relatively modest, the fighting between the two factions has become bitter in recent weeks, threatening to stymie reform altogether. Before the Memorial Day weekend, public interest groups like Common Cause showered the Capitol with letters decrying the freshman bill as "fatally flawed," and some Heavies privately derided the Lites' standard-bearer, Hutchinson, as a "traitor." In response, many of the Republican Lites vowed never to support the Heavies. Even the ordinarily irreproachable Norman Ornstein of the American Enterprise Institute found himself pilloried after endorsing portions of both bills, rather than just one. "They've been ripping the s— out of me," Ornstein said of the die-hard Heavies.

To Republicans' delight, the open-debate strategy has demonstrated that, despite the status quo's well-chronicled corruption, there is still little agreement on how exactly to replace it. "Anyone can be for reform," says Massachusetts Democrat Barney Frank, who supports the Heavies. "The problem is what kind of reform."

The GOP strategy has also confirmed what many skeptics thought all along—namely that, deep down, quite a few Democrats don't want a radical overhaul of the campaign finance system any more than Republicans do and may find their own way to sabotage it. In one "Dear Colleague" letter last September, Texas Representative Martin Frost, chairman of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, warned that banning soft money would annihilate Democratic candidates and eliminate their chances of retaking the House. "The end result of this legislation, if passed in its present form, is that state and county parties would no longer be able to function," he wrote. The letter was signed by liberal members of the Congressional Black Caucus, who feared that, without soft money or PAC contributions, minority candidates would lose access to critical funding in poor, mainly inner-city districts.

Even among those with sincere concerns, there are many Democrats who simply want to preserve a system that essentially preserves them. "I can't wait to see Democrats put their money where their mouth is," said Parker of his one-time allies. Some Democratic aides are already concocting their own poison pill: public financing, which is about as palatable to most Republicans as higher taxes.

Yet parliamentary democracy, it turns out, is as porous and unpredictable as the campaign finance system itself. Many Democrats, assuming Republicans will block reform, say they are planning to cast their lot with the Heavies; and some Republicans, assuming Democrats will splinter their votes, say they may do the same. Already, opponents fear that, once the process is over, a reform bill will emerge with the necessary 218 votes, just as new rules banning lobbyists' gifts did three years ago. "The [GOP] leadership should have killed this when they had the chance," said Scott McInnis, a Republican from Colorado.

Of course, even if it survives the House, there is always the Senate. •

TRENTON POSTCARD

PEOPLE'S PREP

By Mark Francis Cohen

Inside the make-do dining hall, at the northern end of the clock tower building, the students are microwaving breakfast. The room's acoustics amplify the din, as more seventh- and eighth-graders storm in for bacon strips, cereal from plastic containers, and bottled water. At one table, Slimer (pronounced Se-lema) Jackson, a 14-year-old in curlicue earrings, is finishing a bagel—and avoiding eye contact. "I know I go to school here and I sleep here," she huffs, "but *this* is not my home." Her roommate and dining partner, Tanesha Boyd, couldn't agree more. "It's just a place where you lay your head at night."

Go to any prestigious boarding school in the country, and you'll find privileged, overindulged children who think the exact same way. But Jackson and Boyd aren't children of privilege, and they're not getting indulged—at least not in the traditional sense. Rather, Jackson and Boyd are among 48 children who attend New Jersey's Samuel DeWitt Proctor Academy Charter School, a cross between an academic boot camp and an elite prep school that has been billed as the nation's first public boarding academy.

Proctor's mission is to remove disadvantaged children from their disadvantaged backgrounds, place them in a secluded boarding school environment, and prepare them for college. Although the idea of a public boarding school may strike many Americans as odd—remember the ridicule of Newt Gingrich's proposal for more orphanages four years ago—Proctor may well represent the beginning of a new trend in American education. Residential schools focused on needy children are set to open in Washington, D.C., and throughout Minnesota. One opened late last year in Boston.

And that might just be a good thing. When I ask

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Jackson and Boyd whether they are glad to be here, complaints and all, they quickly say "yes." Although reluctant to give up some of the rites of childhood, they are eager for a chance to get a leg up on college—and beyond. "You can't do nothing without money," says Slimer, whose average-sized dorm room is plastered with dozens of pictures of rapper Sean "Puffy" Combs. "This education will take me farther. Here I'll be able to get a scholarship. I can't afford to pay college tuition." I hear the same sentiments from other students: "Here they push us," says another breakfast companion, seventh-grader Amaris Horton. "They know we can do better."

It's not hard to understand why these kids would appreciate such encouragement, even at such a relatively young age. Proctor draws its student body from nearby Trenton, where the unemployment rate is 9.7 percent. Sixty percent of Proctor students qualify for the federal student lunch program; at the outset of the year, the school decided to test the children's eyesight and found that a quarter of them needed glasses.

Back home, most children choose playing around instead of studying, and they shun those who do otherwise. Of the more than 2,600 children who attend Trenton Central High, generally only one-third of them graduate within four years. Last year alone, almost a quarter of the students dropped out. As for the children who stuck with school and were presumably excelling, the statistical portrait is equally withering—a function, in part, of all the problems that so famously plague public schools. Ten of the twelve students who were confident enough to take the Advanced Placement test in United States history scored the lowest possible score: one on a five-point scale. The others earned twos. Only 146 students took the Scholastic Assessment Test, and their average combined math and verbal score was 799. The state average was 1,006.

The scores from Proctor won't be in for some time—it's still in its first year—but they'll likely look a lot different. Proctor is located on a sprawling, golf-course-green campus with tree-shaded drives and red-brick, colonial-style buildings—a setting that creates a quiet, serious environment for learning. Students live by a strict regimen that firms up their behavior and taps the mind: five class periods, morning and afternoon advisory sessions, two hours of study after class, virtually no television, homework check-ins with residential advisers, laundry chores, and uniforms. Generally, the only time they leave the campus unmonitored is during the summer and on weekends, when they can go home. If a student skips a homework assignment or makes an unsatisfactory grade, the consequences may be an early bedtime, missing out on a field trip, or remaining at school for the weekend.

A key element of Proctor's education is small class size—just twelve students to a class. "It's better academically," says Fiona Simpson, an eighth-grader. "Teachers pay more attention to you." Teachers appreciate this, too, just as they appreciate the freshly painted rooms and ample supply of materials lacking in other public schools. Over the year, they have gotten to know their pupils well and to like them. In fact, many of the teachers stick around after school for study hall; some even bring students into their homes to meet the spouse. In group advisories, they encourage the children to read interesting magazine articles, seek promising summer jobs, and take music lessons. "Because the classes are so small, I can touch all the kids," says Jennifer Geoghan, the school's upbeat English teacher. "Sometimes I take it for granted, but then I remember how lucky I am. And I am lucky to have so few students." The school's director, Gary T. Reece, puts in long hours (he frequently stays at work past nine o'clock in the evening) and spends a lot of time thinking about innovation. His latest idea is a fully integrated curriculum, in which students would learn science at the same time they were learning, say, Spanish and math.

Of course, while it's pretty clear Proctor has been good for the students lucky enough to attend, it's not so obvious that Proctor is good for public education generally. Schooling at Proctor is enormously expensive—about $17,000 per student, including room and board—and only $7,911 of that comes from the school district. This is a state requirement; private donations make up the difference. Proctor's administrators—who say they're struggling to stretch their budget already—would prefer the district send more money their way. But Trenton officials complain, understandably, that Proctor is already siphoning off money, and some of the best students, from the district's other schools.

Educators elsewhere looking to replicate Proctor's success should also realize that a key factor in the school's success is the strength of the student body. The same legislation that made Proctor possible, a 1996 state charter law, forbade discrimination of any type. Although the original idea of Proctor was to target at-risk kids who had already displayed emotional and educational problems, enrollment came down to a lottery. Of the parents who entered their children, most were already involved in their kids' education; as a result, the applicant pool represented an unusually well-motivated (and often high-achieving) bunch. "I wanted to get him out of the environment he was in, but I couldn't afford private school," says Vernell Shabazz, whose 13-year-old attends the school.

But these are caveats, not rejoinders. Too high a concentration of problem children could bring down a school anyway; mixing the achievers and underachievers might just be the formula for success. And wealthy families send high-achieving children to special schools. Why shouldn't less wealthy families have the same opportunity? Finally, while the high expense may preclude replication of Proctor on a grand scale, there's no reason that *some* districts—particularly those in areas where sources of private money may indeed be relatively accessible—can't use public

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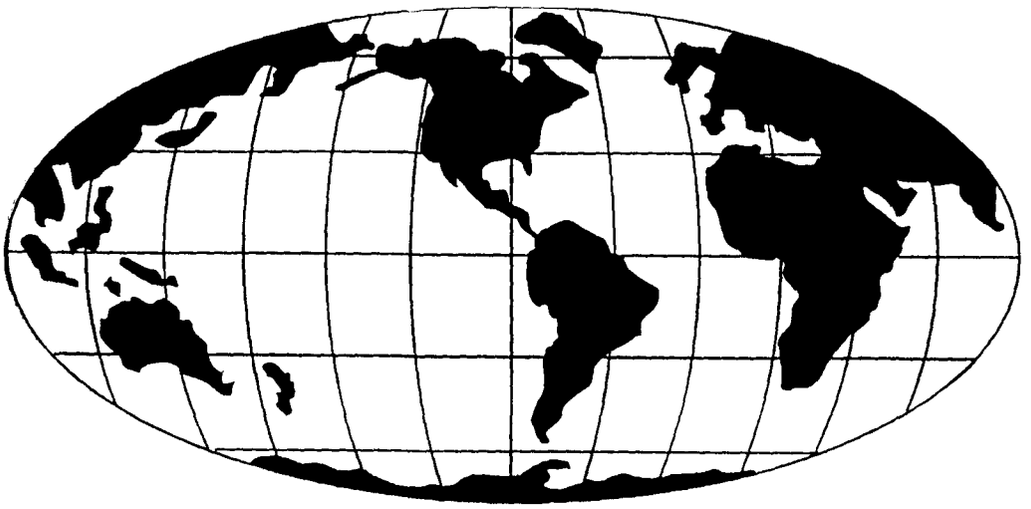

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boarding schools to help *some* kids.

At the very least, it will be interesting to watch Proctor's progress over the next few years. Says Reece, Proctor's director, "We've created a safe haven here where kids can risk caring about school without suffering for it." By all appearances he's right. And, given all the well-chronicled problems with public education these days, that's no small achievement.

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Indonesia discovers free speech.

UNSILENCED

By Margot Cohen

JAKARTA

I left the Philippines for Indonesia in 1990. The contrast was stark. Compared to the rowdy, let-it-all-hang-out, post-Marcos Philippines, Indonesia has long been a country where politics is nothing but stilted soliloquy; where citizens' only outlet for their frustration at the authorities lies in jokes and subtle wordplay; where anger, sadness, and loss are deeply private emotions, reverberating only within trusted circles.

Faced with this repressive environment, I gleaned what I could from those rare moments of quiet revelation when Indonesians lowered their guard to offer glimpses of life under Suharto. There was the wrinkled puppeteer who valiantly tried to entertain fellow inmates during long years in a former prison camp on Buru Island. There was the soft-spoken young Javanese activist tortured with electric shock when the military came looking for his brother. There was the East Java village chief who detailed the crude techniques of electoral fraud, puncturing ballots with a flick of a thumbnail. And there was the East Kalimantan farmer who watched his precious rubber trees consumed by massive forest fires. Like many Indonesians, the farmer wondered whether anyone in the government really cared.

Imagine then, after all those years of hushed interviews, my awe at witnessing Indonesia's recent transformation into a throbbing, bleeding, screaming public spectacle.

Predictably, the international broadcast media rushed in to cover the tumultuous events: student protests, opposition speeches, riots, expatriate evacuations, military displays, Muslim appeals, and, finally, President Suharto's resignation on May 21. Television, however, may have trouble capturing the post-Suharto mood. The rapid buildup of public emotions has not culminated in a mass catharsis. Jubilation does not gladden the air. Instead, Suharto's resignation has left a sense of queasy anxiety, prickling the national psyche like the barbed wire that has been pushed aside from Jakarta's main roads but not yet whisked away.

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"We waited so long for Suharto to go. But, when he left, we couldn't even go down to the streets and dance," mourns an activist in her thirties. "We're numb. We have to remind ourselves that we still have a long fight ahead."

"People are confused," explains Indonesian psychologist Niniek L. Karim. "They don't know what is right and what is wrong. They have not trusted anyone for so long."

The man now calling for the public's trust is B.J. Habibie, the former vice president, a loquacious German-educated engineer who led the nation's costly and controversial airplane-manufacturing program. Last January, he granted me an impromptu audience and gushed over his mentor as "Super Genius Suharto." Habibie also downplayed the impact of a freshly minted International Monetary Fund mandate cutting off all state subsidies for his airplanes, which he insisted are commercially viable anyway.

In the first minutes of his first presidential speech on May 21, he did not cut a particularly reassuring figure. State television unfortunately framed him in a long shot, leaving the already diminutive Habibie dwarfed by a grand desk and a towering flagpole. Viewers fought back flashbacks of the prepubescent Macaulay Culkin in *Home Alone*.

But Habibie is not home alone—his presidency is buttressed by the solid presence of the armed forces' chief, General Wiranto, and coordinating minister Ginandjar Kartasasmita, the smooth-spoken technocrat steering Indonesia's compliance with the IMF program. Indeed, when the state television cameras finally moved in to capture Habibie in close-up, he solemnly pledged allegiance to the IMF and declared that Indonesia's central bank would wield independent authority. All this, combined

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with the immediate release of some political prisoners and promises that the new administration would hold prompt elections, has raised international hopes for fresh progress.

Yet Habibie's domestic fortunes are plagued by the widespread public distrust of government that Suharto left as his legacy. The new president remains tainted by his former loyalties and excesses, even though his brother and son have just resigned from cushy jobs with state-run companies.

Meanwhile, Indonesians are also beginning to doubt themselves. On the surface, the May uprising against Suharto looks like a profoundly empowering event: a textbook case of civil society toppling an aging leader whose military backing remained constant until the last minute. But, once Suharto stepped aside, many Indonesians were thrust back into their old feeling of insecurity.

The whispered fears are back. My phone rings endlessly with questions from friends and acquaintances about shadowy power plays. Indonesia's bleak economic outlook continues to cast a long shadow on all levels of society. No one has recovered from the trauma of anti-Chinese rioting and looting of May 13–14. It's tough to shake off the memories of the charred bodies of hundreds of looters caught in buildings they had torched themselves. And it's hard to say what's worse—the vast tracts of devastated buildings, mostly owned by ethnic Chinese, destroyed by the rioters or the scrawled signs indicating the ethnic Malay ownership of shops and homes that were spared. In Jakarta's suburban neighborhoods, homeowners still patrol the streets at night, waking at noon, bleary-eyed and anxious.

Some student activists are also suffering from postpartum fatigue. Their numbers are waning, many of them reasoning that they might as well put up with Habibie for the interim period before elections. But, in cities and towns around the country, many other students insist that they will press ahead with demonstrations to force an immediate change in leadership. Musicians are holding concerts, and opposition figures are assembling at public forums to fight for what they refer to as "Total Reform."

"We are skeptical whether [Habibie] will make any real changes in the system," says Annas Alamudi, a 21-year-old activist at the University of Indonesia. "He will support the status quo." Annas and his friends believe that Habibie will block attempts to recover the billions that Suharto's family has siphoned from the economy—money that many students believe is crucial to the nation's economic recovery.

Just four months ago, it seemed doubtful that these students could alter the political landscape. Sure, the economy was bad, many observers reasoned, but it could take months to reach dire proportions; and the political opposition remained divided. But, ultimately, such cool calculations failed to take into account the raw emotional power of martyrdom. The fate of four students, gunned down by security forces during a peaceful demonstration on May 12 at Jakarta's Trisakti University, unquestionably tipped the emotional scales against the regime.

On that day I was in Lampung, South Sumatra, reporting on swarms of locusts that had invaded farmers' fields. When a Lampung student activist told me that the locusts were a sign that Suharto would fall, I just smiled. But, when I returned to Jakarta on the night bus and switched on the morning TV news at a neighbor's house, it struck me that he might be right. I watched my neighbor, a retired schoolteacher, wipe away tears at the sight of the corpses wrapped snugly in blood-spattered sheets. I saw flags flying at half-mast on every block in my middle-class neighborhood. And, when I arrived at the Trisakti campus for the public memorial, I witnessed moral outrage of an intensity unlike any I had seen at previous student protests.

"This is it," I jotted in my notebook. After the Trisakti shootings, there could be no more taboos on attacking Suharto, no holding back in the language hurled at the powers that be. Both the local press and private Indonesian TV stations had played a vital role over the last several months in fanning anti-government feeling across the country, but the murders would boost criticism to new levels.

"We will keep going until this crazy regime is smashed!" read one of the hundreds of messages scribbled on a white banner on campus. Crouching in the blazing sun, thousands of students, faculty, and activists greeted the defiant words of opposition leaders with thunderous cheers. A star speaker was Ernalia, wife of Sri Bintang Pamungkas, a longtime dissident who landed in jail in 1996 after allegedly agitating against Suharto in Germany. (Sri Bintang was among the first prisoners set free by Habibie.)

The student killings were loudly denounced as "a crime against humanity" by Amien Rais, leader of the 25-million-member Muslim organization Muhammadiyah and the man now angling to become the nation's next elected president. "God will surely grant victory to our struggle!" he proclaimed. "God is Great!" the crowd roared back.

Even more striking was the protesters' total intolerance of establishment figures who belatedly attempted to jump on the opposition bandwagon. For instance, Surjadi, the military-backed candidate who replaced popular opposition leader Megawati Sukarnoputri as chairman of the Indonesian Democratic Party, was met with shouts of "whore!" and a hailstorm of empty plastic water bottles. The fact that he showed up at all was a sign of how oblivious politicians had become under the old system.

The mood darkened further when riots erupted just outside the campus, with crowds smashing street lamps and torching an overturned car. As tear gas wafted over the campus, protesters hurriedly doused handkerchiefs with water and retreated to safer ground. Upstairs in the air-conditioned oasis of the school's audiovisual center, a gaggle of stylish students recharged their cell phones, essential tools for this generation's crop of agitators.

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More madness erupted the following day, when the smoke rising from the epicenters of Jakarta riots seemed to rival the burning forests of Kalimantan. Distressing news came from the normally genteel Javanese town of Solo, which had been totally destroyed by mobs. Then, on Friday, May 15, thousands of Muslims poured into the Al Azhar mosque in South Jakarta for religious and political guidance. One after another, Muslim leaders reminded the faithful that the push for reform must remain peaceful—and must continue until it succeeds.

The heady days of mid-May were also punctuated by press conferences held by various groups of intellectuals, retired military officers, and religious figures, all pressing for speedy presidential succession. In retrospect, behind-the-scenes maneuvering by former Suharto loyalists and Muslim leaders probably gave the stubborn 76-year-old president the final push. Yet the emotional power of the May uprising was concentrated at parliament, where tens of thousands of students, workers, activists, and even young professionals conducted a sit-in that can only be described as shocking by Indonesian standards.

The vast parliament building looks like a structure out of *Brave New World*, with squat spaceship-like architecture encasing empty hallways of spotless marble. Only last March I had made my way down those sterile halls and joined the yawning dignitaries assembled to witness Suharto's ritual inauguration for a seventh presidential term. Now, two months later, I was back, marveling at the scruffy protesters camped out on the carpets, clambering over the roof, cramming the courtyard, and sloshing through the fountain. A group of University of Indonesia students in yellow school jackets speared a poster to a tree. "$oeharto," it read, "We, the People are tired ... 1. to be your slave 2. to be your toy 3. to obey you. CONCLUSION: We're Sick of You." Another poster simply proclaimed, "Suharto is a modern-day monkey."

Inside parliament, students in gray school jackets sang lustily, and it was a good thing that Siti Hardijanti Rukmana, the president's eldest daughter known as "Tutut," wasn't around to listen. "Look at Tutut, she won't even have time to fart 'cuz her Daddy has to scram," rang the first verse.

The group of protesters who went to meet a handful of parliamentarians drawn from the military on May 20 was somewhat more decorous. The men, most in their early twenties and thirties, arrived in button-down shirts and ties; the women in business suits. But their demure attire belied the brazenness of their demands.

"Our intellects have been insulted for thirty-two years," insisted a young stock analyst, pinning the blame on Suharto. "Don't allow him to insult our consciences. Don't allow him to destroy the nation."

The military men hemmed and hawed. They found few words to satisfy these young, ambitious members of the well-educated elite, so dependent on economic recovery, so recently roused from their political apathy. I watched the yuppies rise from their chairs as though leaving a board meeting, only to warble a solemn rendition of the national anthem. "Topple Suharto!" they shouted as the song ended, raising their fists.

Now, dazed by the speed of the old man's collapse, few Indonesians seem to be able to maintain that fighting spirit. But, with new political parties forming and the local media pushing reforms, it at least seems safe to conclude that Indonesia's long era of guarded silence has finally passed. •

In defense of the SAT.

A TRUE TEST

By Adrian Wooldridge

Question: On average, blacks and Latinos score well below whites and Asians on the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT). What should we do about this? *(a)* Take race into account when considering test scores. *(b)* Allow blacks and Latinos to go underrepresented, as a proportion of the population, on elite campuses. *(c)* Scrap the tests. *(d)* Overhaul our educational system from the bottom up.

Until recently, of course, the answer of most college admissions offices was *(a)*. But in November 1996 California voters decided to declare that answer unconstitutional when they passed Proposition 209, banning affirmative action. Ever since then a vocal group of Californian academics and activists has been arguing for replacing *(a)* with *(c)*, in order to maintain levels of

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minority admissions to the state university system.

To be sure, it's not the first time the SAT has come under fire. For the past 35 years there has been no shortage of people who think that standardized tests are the work of the devil: Marxists who regard them as instruments of class segregation, postmodernists who ridicule them for making naïve distinctions between "right" and "wrong," and, most important of all, ethnic activists who argue that they are suffused with white middle-class values.

But Proposition 209 has provided the anti-testing movement with a new cause—and a new legitimacy. Last September, for example, the University of California's Latino Eligibility Task Force proposed disregarding SAT scores in university admissions entirely in order to counteract the effects of abolishing affirmative action. So far the university has resisted such moves, but the university's president, Richard Atkinson, has pronounced the idea "intriguing." And the anti-testers, led by Eugene Garcia, the dean of Berkeley's School of Education, continue their agitation.

Garcia and his allies have undoubtedly hit on a subject that worries opponents and supporters of affirmative action alike: the huge gap between the average SAT scores of whites, on the one hand, and Latinos and blacks on the other. In 1995, for example, only one black student scored 750 or above on the mathematics portion of the SAT for every 89 whites. Even Ward Connerly, the architect of Proposition 209, briefly welcomed the idea of scrapping the SAT.

In picking on the SAT, the anti-testers have also found a particularly vulnerable target. Apart, of course, from the companies that make millions of dollars out of devising and administering them, nobody much likes tests that reduce knowledge to a set of isolated facts, ripped out of context and divorced from interpretation; turn reasoning into a mechanical exercise in ticking boxes; and drive a fair number of the million or so people who take them each year to despair.

The people who design these tests argue that all this is a price worth paying because the SAT is much more objective than other forms of assessment. Yet it's no great secret that you can boost your SAT score substantially by cramming—nor is it any great secret that minorities and the poor lack the resources to take advantage of classes that provide the most useful cramming. What's more, a good SAT score is hardly a guarantee of academic success. In studies of several hundred colleges, the correlation between test scores and freshman GPAs was only in the range of 0.42 to 0.48.

Some of the anti-testers are populists who are opposed to introducing any system of rationing into the elysian world of the American campus. Some are know-nothings who believe that, since all forms of testing are fallible, we might as well distribute university places by lottery. But there are more persuasive reformers, too, and they base their arguments not on the evils of selection in general but on the particular ills of the SAT. All they want to do, they argue, is to devise a more sophisticated system of selection: one that gives students more of a chance to express their intellectual talents and creative powers than these multiple-choice monstrosities.

Ah, if only it were that easy. One obvious problem with this critique is that it rests on an exaggerated view of how blindly and exclusively public universities rely on the SAT. SATs are primarily used as screening devices at highly competitive institutions such as Berkeley. Most prospective students can get into lesser institutions almost regardless of their SAT scores. And the most exclusive universities use the SAT alongside a range of other indicators, such as grade-point averages (GPAs), standardized achievement tests (which are designed by the same company that administers the SAT and test knowledge in specific subjects, like history or math), teacher recommendations, and other school records.

The real question, then, is what role SATs should play in the mixture of tests that are used to decide who gets into elite universities. And the problem facing the SAT's critics is that putting less weight on these tests could end up making the already fraught system even worse than it is at the moment.

To succeed in the peculiar conditions of American higher education, selection systems must have two attributes. First, they must be susceptible to mass production. At Oxford, for example, the selection system avoided the most obvious defects of the SAT. Candidates wrote large numbers of one-hour essays; their prospective teachers spent days pouring over their manuscripts; and what mattered was the quality of the arguments rather than the mere ability to regurgitate facts.

But applying that model in the United States would be difficult. Oxford sits on the top of a ruthlessly selective system of education that sorts people into streams early in life and devotes a disproportionate amount of public resources to grooming the elite. In the United States, with its emphasis on providing everybody with second chances, such a system would be impossible. The University of California, which selects more than 25,000 students each year, has no choice but to reduce selection to something of a routine. Essays and projects will inevitably end up being evaluated by admissions officers according to one predetermined formula or another.

The second requirement of selection systems is that they must appear as objective as possible, relying on precise measurement rather than fine judgment. In a country as ethnically divided and litigious as the United States, universities need to be able to point to value-free measures in order to minimize strife. The Oxford dons who pronounce mystically on whether a candidate possesses "a trace of alpha" would soon create a backlash in the United States—particularly since such a large number of those who show up favorably on the alpha detectors turn out to be Old Etonians.

To be sure, an alternative system could involve a more fine-tuned standardized examination instead of a group of professors scrutinizing essays. But there is no

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obvious reason to believe that more sophisticated tests would be more likely to favor underrepresented minorities than the SAT. Why should somebody who has never been taught about Archduke Ferdinand suddenly blossom when asked to write an essay on the origins of World War I? The only way to stop children of privilege from pulling still further ahead under such a system would be to rig it in favor of minorities—by awarding extra marks to candidates who bring a "different perspective" to their work or maybe by asking questions less dependent on specific areas of knowledge.

But students who lost out as a result of such rigging would be unlikely to stay quiet. A more sophisticated selection system might rapidly degenerate into a game of power politics, in which vocal pressure groups agitate for their definitions of merit to prevail and in which recourse to the courts becomes routine. The left would give high marks for self-expression (particularly if the self being expressed had been touched by suffering or shaped by social exclusion); the right would counter that what matters is knowledge of traditional academic subjects; and the nation's campuses would be torn apart by a culture war that would make today's guerrilla skirmishes look benign.

Because of these manifold problems, the critics of the SAT are being forced to resort, for practical purposes, to more mundane measures of promise, such as class ranking and GPA. Yet there is little reason to think that these devices will do anything to improve the fortunes of racial minorities. In 1995, almost twice as many white students as black ranked in the top tenth of their class, according to the College Entrance Examination Board. Only eight percent of black students had an "A" average compared with 21 percent of whites and 27 percent of Asians.

Indeed, when the University of California looked into the implications of abolishing the SAT, it found that the impact on the racial composition of the university would be mixed: The number of Latinos eligible for places would rise by five percent, but the number of blacks eligible would decline by 18 percent. Fourteen percent more whites would qualify for places, while the number of eligible Asians would fall.

These alternatives are also less reliable than the SAT. A recent study by the Educational Testing Service found that SATs are better than high school GPAs in predicting freshman grades in nearly all subjects. By the same token, the Law School Admissions Test—the LSAT—seems to be a substantially better predictor of first-year performance in law school than undergraduate GPA.

GPAs have always been unreliable indicators because different schools use different grading systems. And, even within schools, different teachers grade according to different standards. A 1994 study by the Department of Education, for example, found that students receiving an "A minus" in schools in impoverished areas might well have received a "C" or "D" in schools in more affluent areas. GPAs are getting steadily less reliable, too, because of the impact of grade inflation. The percentage of college-bound seniors reporting an "A" average increased from 28 percent in 1987 to 37 percent a decade later, and this inflation is only likely to get worse if universities start giving more weight to school grades. Judging students by their GPAs will inevitably involve admission officers in judging the reliability of schools as much as the promise of their graduates, a process that is unlikely to redound to the advantage of the inner cities.

Another alternative is to provide automatic admission for the top performers in each school. This has the advantage of measuring children against competitors from similar backgrounds. It also eliminates one of the most obvious biases from the old system of affirmative action: the fact that the children of black lawyers get an automatic advantage over the children of white valet-parkers, since nowadays school population is more segregated by class than by race.

This solution has been adopted by the University of Texas, which has scrapped affirmative action but substituted a system that automatically admits the top ten percent of students in each high school, regardless of SAT scores, into the state's public university system. Advocates of this system such as Lani Guinier, who sang Texas's praises in a recent *New York Times* op-ed, claim it will actually boost minority enrollment beyond levels affirmative action produced.

But, even if true, there are two big problems with this scheme. First, it further reduces pressure on schools to improve their performance: If lousy schools send graduates to the best universities, why should they strive to teach better? Second, this scheme would force even more ill-prepared students into elite universities than affirmative action did. Under such a system, the alumni of South Central's sink schools will eventually have to compete with the alumni of Lowell High. They will just do it when they get to Berkeley, where the pressure is intense and the possibilities of remedial teaching are minimal, rather than when they are trying to get into a university.

What makes this whole exercise so ironic, of course, is the fact that, until very recently, standardized testing was an instrument of upward mobility—and not a barrier to opportunity. Napoleon used tests to introduce the aristocrat-destroying principle of a "career open to the talents." British Whigs such as Macaulay and Trevelyan used tests to open Oxbridge and the civil service, hitherto playgrounds for the idle rich, to lower-class meritocrats.

In the United States, testing played a vital role in forcing the WASP-dominated Ivy Leagues to admit Jews and white ethnics—and then blacks, Asians, and Hispanics. When, in 1933, Harvard's President James Bryant Conant launched a revolutionary scholarship program that awarded money solely on the basis of academic promise, the person he employed to detect that promise was Henry Chauncey, who later went on to found the

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Educational Testing Service. During a 1955 Supreme Court hearing to debate ways of implementing *Brown* v. *Board of Education*, Thurgood Marshall, then a lawyer for the NAACP, relied on testing to explode the segregationist argument that the average black child was so far behind the average white that it made no sense to educate them in the same schools. Why not test all children, black as well as white, he argued, and educate them according to their test results rather than by the color of their skin?

Real conservatives have always regarded tests as tools of subversion. T.S. Eliot, for example, argued that "a vast calculating machine that would automatically sort out each generation afresh according to a culture index of each child" would "disorganize society and debase education." Perhaps the oddest thing about the current debate on testing is the way that the contemporary left, corrupted by identity politics, Foucault-chic, and entitlement mania, has turned against what ought to be one of its most powerful tools.

True, yesterday's conservatives opposed tests because they admitted too many members of minority groups, while today's liberals oppose them because they admit too few. But these liberals should remember that pendulums swing. If they can rig the selection process one way, their successors will be able to rig it another. They should also remember that choosing students for elite education is not like choosing guests for a dinner party. One of the glories of the testing movement is that it has taken selection out of the hands of academic patrons, with their weakness for passing fads, and forced it to become a little more rigorous.

Tests do more than just provide opportunities for the deserving. They provide vital information about how both schools and pupils are doing. This allows students to take corrective action and make informed choices. It also allows society to judge the performance of its educational institutions—and to put pressure on them if they seem to be failing in their basic tasks. For all their imperfections, standardized tests are probably the most powerful instruments of accountability in education that America has.

The word "information" here is crucial. The great merit of tests is that they provide us with relatively objective information about both individuals and institutions—and the great disgrace at the heart of the anti-testing movement is that it is trying to conceal information that it regards as unpalatable. What makes this even sadder is that tests are getting ever better at spotting and diagnosing learning difficulties as they unfold.

If anything, the real problem with the SAT is that we use them too little and too late. We have relegated them to the depressing role of eliminating students who are not up to scratch, rather than using them to diagnose and eliminate learning difficulties as they emerge. What we need is more testing rather than less—and more willingness to act on the results of those tests so that the poor of whatever race are no longer given such a rotten deal by America's schools. •

The Democrats' new right-wing recruits.

PARTY CRASHERS

By Dana Milbank

Loy Sneary, candidate for Congress from the Fourteenth District of Texas, is the kind of Democrat Dick Armey could love.

Where does he stand on gun control? He wants to overturn the ban on assault weapons. Abortion rights? He's pro-life. Sneary favors a constitutional amendment banning flag burning—a position even his Republican opponent opposes. On top of that, he boasts, he sides with business over environmentalists, and he declares himself a defense hawk. In fact, the farmer and former county judge will position himself as more *conservative* than his Republican opponent, libertarian Congressman Ron Paul, on issues such as crime and drugs. The AFL-CIO, which endorsed a more conventional Democrat in the primary, isn't even speaking to Sneary.

Democrats spend most of their energy running *against* guys like this. And yet the Democratic Party is trumpeting Sneary as one of its top candidates for 1998. The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, ignoring its usual vow of neutrality, took Sneary's side in the primary against his more liberal opponent, Tom Reed, and sent out a notice advertising a Sneary fundraiser. Never mind that Reed ran around calling Sneary a Republican in disguise. The party, says Sneary campaign manager Ken Bryan, "told us Tom Reed was more in tune with their ideas but Loy was more electable."

For the Democrats, this is all that matters. "The only real litmus test we have is, 'Who are you going to vote

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for for speaker?'" says Paul Frick, the DCCC's political director. But even that modest requirement may be too much. "I've not promised any vote to anybody, and I've not been asked," Sneary says. "They have their reasons for wanting me to win this seat, and I have mine. As long as the Democratic leadership doesn't make any demands, I certainly don't have any problem with them."

It's an odd marriage, but not an atypical one this year. After four years in the wilderness, Democrats are willing to do what it takes—and, apparently, whatever it takes—to win back the House. And so, to pick up the eleven seats separating them from majority status, they have embraced a group of conservative Democrats who are, to varying degrees, pro-life, pro-gun, pro-death penalty, pro-term limits, pro-school prayer—and, in everything but party affiliation, pro-Republican.

There is David Phelps in Illinois, whose campaign staff gleefully calls him a "pro-gun, pro-life gospel singer." Alabama has Joe Turnham, a self-described "evangelical Christian" who attends prayer meetings, does Christian talk radio, and opposes abortion and gun control, while backing a mandatory moment of silence for prayer in school. ("We love God and we like our right to own arms," says he.)

In Kentucky, there's Ken Lucas, who wouldn't even permit abortions for a victim of rape or incest and is courting the National Rifle Association and the Gun Owners of America. He favors term limits, a balanced budget amendment, abolition of the estate tax, school prayer, and the death penalty. And don't look for him down at the union hall: A former Chamber of Commerce chairman, he supports NAFTA, fast-track trade authority, and Most Favored Nation status for China. Nor is it just a Southern thing. Roy Afflerbach, in Allentown, Pennsylvania, favors unfettered trade, a balanced budget amendment, and conservative "takings" legislation that infuriates environmentalists; he plans to position himself as closer to business than his Republican opponent.

Of course, even in Franklin Roosevelt's day, the Democrats counted among their ranks some congressmen with conservative positions. In the 1990s, the prominence of the centrist Democratic Leadership Council and the rise of its former chairman—Bill Clinton—has kept the Democratic Party listing right. But the aspiring Class of '98 represents something beyond even the New Democrats. Typically, when a Democrat takes a conservative position, it is a quirk in an otherwise progressive agenda—a Catholic Democrat who's pro-life; a Southern Democrat who's a defense hawk; a rural Democrat who opposes gun control. There are a series of well-known litmus tests—some on social issues, others on economic issues—and Democrats can typically violate only one or two to remain true.

This new crop of ostensibly Democratic candidates breaks that rule. Conservatism to them is not an idiosyncrasy—it is their defining characteristic. Some are social conservatives with populist economic views. Some are fiscal conservatives with libertarian social positions. And some are just downright conservative. On a number of key issues, they come out closer to the Republican leadership in the House than the Democratic leadership. Bob Doyle, a fund-raising consultant who advises moderate and conservative Democrats, says more than half of the Democrats running in the truly competitive races are conservatives.

But what's most remarkable—and most telling—about this shift is that it is being supported by the party organization itself. The DCCC, which typically hews to party orthodoxy, has been actively recruiting these candidates for some of the nation's most important races, while simultaneously quieting more liberal opponents. The party is also, with limited success, pushing the left's interest groups to fund the conservatives. To some, it's a shrewd and pragmatic acknowledgment of the country's conservative shift—a tactical move claiming the center from a Republican Party that has swung hard to the right. To others, it's a sign that the Democratic Party is selling its soul.

To regain the majority, Democratic strategists have calculated that they need to do the following: Hold all but two of nine Democratic open seats, win eight Republican open seats, beat nine GOP incumbents, and lose only three Democratic incumbents. It's a rather tall order. The historical trend runs against the party in the White House in midterm elections, particularly during second-term midterm elections, and a humming economy should help protect the Republican incumbents—whose campaigns will be better funded anyway. Most handicappers think Democrats will, at best, hold their own. *The Cook Political Report* sees a swing of no more than three seats, while Stuart Rothenberg predicts a Democratic gain of one to three seats. As always, the vast majority of seats—90 percent or more—aren't seriously contested.

Still, the Democrats have a few factors working in their favor—enough, at least, to give them a ray of hope. The Republicans have been strained by ideological warfare in California, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, and elsewhere. In addition, Clinton in 1996 didn't have the sort of coattails that artificially inflated the Democratic ranks in Congress—in other words, there are fewer marginal Democratic seats to defend. With that in mind, Mark Gersh, a consultant to the DCCC who advises the party on recruiting, set out last year to compile demograhic "profiles" of the competitive districts. Gersh, known as the "guru" at DCCC headquarters on South Capitol Street, figured out what kinds of candidates would match the profiles.

This exercise produced some mixed news. On the one hand, the Democrats would have to run conservative candidates to win in some of the most crucial races. (By the party's own count, a third of its candidates in the most competitive races are anti-abortion.) On the other hand, if they did so, they could be competitive in districts that might otherwise be off-limits. It was not

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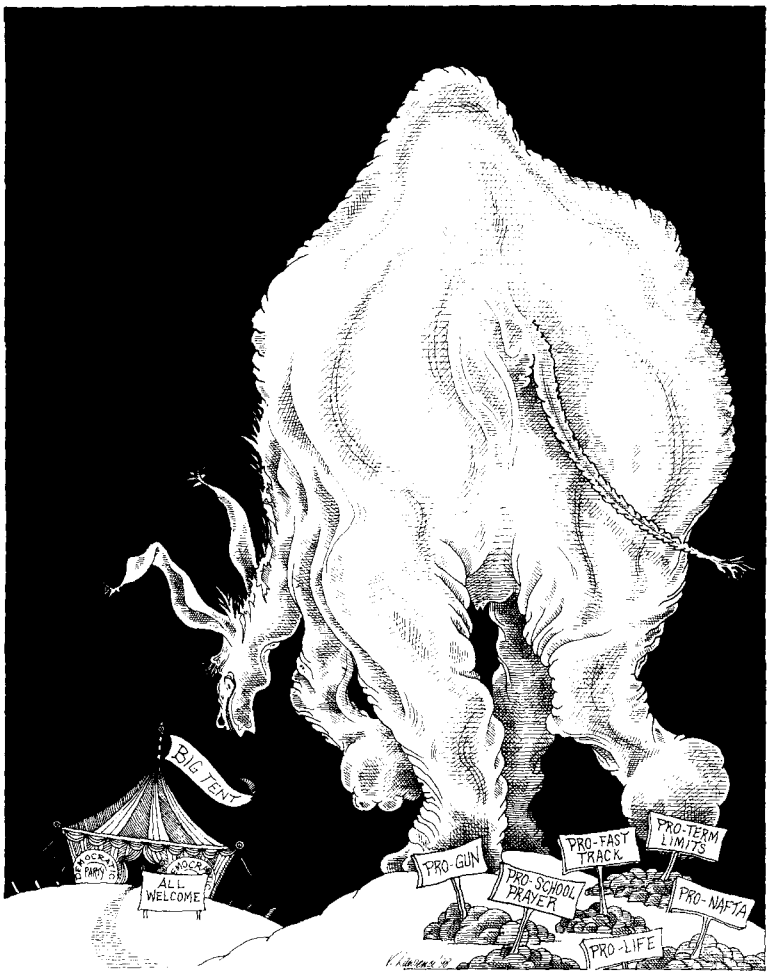
the kind of price the party would have been willing to pay as recently as two years ago, but sitting on the sidelines of power has a funny way of changing the perspective of politicians. "We have consciously gone out and tried to recruit candidates that matched the districts this time," says Martin Frost, the Texas congressman who chairs the DCCC. "In some cases people tended to write off certain districts because they were conservative, but we went out to find candidates. We've tried to find people who can be elected and put us in the majority."

And they have—with remarkable determination. Take the case of Pat Casey, a Democratic House candidate in Scranton, Pennsylvania, and son of the state's former governor, Robert Casey. When the younger Casey discusses his run for Congress, the story takes on a Shakespearean tone of filial revenge. Our play begins in Cleveland, in 1992, when Patrick, Prince of Scranton, watches in horror as his father, Robert, Governor of Pennsylvania, receives treatment most foul from the Democrats' platform committee. They reject his call for anti-abortion language in the platform. Two months later, the party denies Casey a speaking role at the convention. Party officials don't return his phone calls. "They tried to make him into a Jerry Falwell," young Casey says. "He got to the pinnacle of his political life, and then he was kicked down the steps by his own party." Casey retires two years later, a pariah in the party. *Adieu, adieu, adieu. Remember me!*



DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

In the next act, the liberal Claudiuses of the Democratic Party are vanquished by the righteous electorate, which gives Republicans control of both houses of Congress. Young Casey gets his revenge in 1998, when Republican Joseph McDade retires as congressman, giving Democrats their first shot at the northeastern Pennsylvania seat in 36 years. The Democratic Party recruits Pat Casey to run, though he is even more conservative than Dad. Not only is young Casey pro-life, but he wants to repeal the assault-gun ban his father (and Republican McDade) supported. Yet the humbled Democrats can no longer afford to quibble over ideology. The DCCC railroads Casey's Democratic opponent, an environmental lawyer, out of the race. "They called and said, 'What's going on up there?'" says the challenger, Joe Cullen, McDade's 1996 opponent. "I was getting the message of, 'Gee, why are you in this race?'" On the eve of the deadline for Cullen to withdraw, the custodians of party orthodoxy, led by Dick Gephardt and Frost, host a fund-raiser for Casey at Bullfeathers on Capitol Hill, netting him $80,000.

"The irony is incredible when you think about it," the 32-year-old Patrick Casey muses as we sit in the living room of his parents' Victorian home in Scranton, a block down from the town's Millionaires' Row. Casey and his brother Matt, who's also his campaign manager, are still seething about their father's treatment. But they are savoring the revenge. "The Democrats are moving back toward where people in this district and this country are, and that's a socially conservative position," Pat Casey says. "Hopefully, they learned their lesson."

The DCCC argues that there just happen to be more conservative seats up for grabs this year (some of them vacated by conservative Democrats). But it's hard to make the case that this is all a geographical accident. "The candidates who are running in 1998 are markedly more conservative" than the 1996 crowd, says David Heller, a Democratic media consultant. Heller says it's "hard to believe it's the nature of the particular districts in play." In 1996, for example, the Democrats blew their chance to oust freshman Republican Phil English in Erie, Pennsylvania, when they ran a moderate; this year, Pennsylvanians Afflerbach and Casey, running in Allentown and Scranton, are of a more conservative mold.

Indeed, some of these new New Democrats sound so much like Republicans that it's not very clear why they *aren't* Republicans in the first place. In the Oklahoma seat being abandoned by party-switching Republican

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Wes Watkins, some Democrats, noting that the Republicans haven't fielded a credible candidate, fear that the Democratic candidates are conspiring to switch after they get elected.

Even moderate Democrats harbor apprehensions. One New Democrat in the House sees a disturbing new strain of conservative Democrats—Democrats who are socially conservative and economic populists—who won't fit in the New Democrat Coalition or even in the Blue Dogs, both of which favor business-friendly policies. "That's almost the worst of all worlds for us," he says. Cal Dooley, a California congressman and leader of the New Democrat Coalition, feels "an element of concern" that among the candidates "there are more conservative Democrats who are not necessarily consistent with our pro-growth strategy."

To be sure, many of the conservative Democratic candidates have progressive quirks that tie them to the party. (Lucas, for example, has a soft spot for Head Start and prenatal care.) Another factor in their rise is the residual strength of the Democratic Party in many districts—particularly Southern ones—where the Republican organization is not yet strong. Also, most of these Democratic conservatives couldn't survive Republican primaries, because the Republicans have shifted to the right just as swiftly as the Democrats have. Republican primaries are decided by flat-taxers and religious extremists.

But the best explanation for the DCCC's strategy may simply be that the country has gotten more conservative. By adapting, the thinking goes, the Democratic Party may save itself. "Democrats don't have the luxury of foolish decision-making any more," says Alan Secrest, a Democratic pollster. "You wander in the wilderness a few years, and suddenly your pro-life brethren don't seem nearly as threatening." And, since the Republican Party keeps veering off to the right, it makes a lot of sense for Democrats to target the middle.

Or does it? Democrats would, by restoring their majority, enjoy the usual perks of majority status—committee chairmanships, more powerful leadership positions, and so on. Yet, even if Democrats win a nominal majority, the conservative recruits make clear it won't be a governable majority on most of the issues at the heart of the party's agenda. They won't be able to enact much legislation—but, since they'll be the majority party, they'll have to take the blame for inaction. Some Democrats also fear, plausibly, that with a razor-thin majority they would have even more trouble than the Republicans now have in holding themselves together as a party. Being in the majority could explode the momentary peace among the Democrats' own factions and do the party more harm than remaining in the minority.

For the party's paleoliberal core, the new strategy is particularly perilous. If the Democrats' new slate is successful, establishment liberals will continue to shrink as a proportion of the party. The New Democrat Coalition, formed after the 1996 elections, has over 40 members, more than half of them freshmen. The group is backing 16 more in November. "It's possible that this election could turn the balance of power in the Democratic caucus," says Dooley. The New Democrats, the more conservative Blue Dogs, and their fellow travelers have about 80 votes; they need another 30 to outvote the liberals. "The balance of power within the caucus is much closer than what is commonly perceived," Dooley says.

Given that calculus, it should come as no surprise that liberal interest groups and political action committees are the ones most reluctant to play along with the DCCC. This poses a problem for the new crop of conservatives, who need these groups' funds, endorsements, and volunteers.

Just ask Marjorie McKeithen, the Democrat challenging Louisiana's Richard Baker in one of the Democrats' targeted races. She's pro-life, favors repealing the assault-gun ban, and wants flag-burning and balanced budget amendments as well as school prayer and the death penalty. She sounds like a Republican, and her father, Louisiana's secretary of state, is a Republican. Though the DCCC is doing its best to link her to the key PACs in Washington—it even had Vice President Gore sing her praises on a trip to New Orleans—her conservative stances have burned the bridges between her and the Democratic Party's fund-raising base. When the campaign manager, Chris Cooper, approached the League of Conservation Voters, the environmentalists slammed the door. "They want something they can't have: Pacific Northwest progressives," Cooper says. "The national party organization has realized half a loaf is better than no loaf, but that's hard for some of the special interest groups to follow."

Betsy Loyless, the LCV's political director, agrees that it's "pretty unlikely" the group would support somebody like McKeithen—even though her opponent, Baker, received a rating of just six percent, among the lowest in the House (even the LCV's "dirty dozen" in 1996 averaged 13 percent). Loyless says McKeithen is "at best" 50 percent—much better, yes, but still not good enough for funding or an endorsement. "We're not about enhancing Democrats' runs for Congress; we're about electing pro-conservation candidates," Loyless says.

Emily's List backs only pro-choice women—and it, too, has been at odds with the DCCC in more than one race this year. In Kentucky, the local affiliate of Emily's List backed Democrat Virginia Woodward in her bid to unseat Republican Anne Northup. But the party, while officially neutral, quietly pushed a pro-life Democrat in the primary, Chris Gorman. Gorman's campaign manager, Mike Muller, says that he was directed to the race by the Democratic National Committee and that Dick Gephardt encouraged Gorman to run. The DCCC also had a hand in linking Gorman to Washington donors and, consultants say, in persuading labor to support

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Gorman instead of Woodward. "There's a concern on our part that they're so actively promoting these anti-choice candidates," says Stephanie Cohen, spokeswoman for Emily's List and a former DCCC official. "It's worrying to see the D-triple-C helping so many anti-choice candidates."

Anticipating such trouble from the Democrats' traditional backers, a group of moderate Democrats in 1996 formed the New Democrat Network, which will spend $1 million in the 1998 elections. But a bigger source of help for conservative Democrats may be one of the most traditionally liberal groups of all: organized labor.

The AFL-CIO plans to spend money on fewer races this year, and it has directed its state affiliates to "raise the bar on endorsements," says Steve Rosenthal, the AFL-CIO's political director. It will also back some Republicans and expend more effort on state and local races, building up its farm team as the Christian Coalition and NRA have done so well on the right. In House races, "the candidates tend not to be the type of people who stand up for working people," Rosenthal says. Even so, he adds, "in the end, we'll hold our nose and support candidates we don't love." Labor has no problem backing social conservatives with populist economic positions, but it's even gambling on some fiscal conservatives.

In Allentown, Pennsylvania, Afflerbach offers the union that kind of choice. He's no foe of labor (he scored a 50 percent in the AFL-CIO's most recent rating and 77 percent lifetime), but he's not as faithfully pro-union as the retiring Democrat, Paul McHale, who regularly scored at the top of the AFL-CIO rating. Afflerbach describes himself as "more business-oriented" than McHale. He not only favors free trade but also supported a Pennsylvania effort to reduce worker's compensation. He describes himself as "right of center" and says even a candidate with centrist views like McHale's could no longer get elected in this district. As a result, he has no choice but to talk tough about labor—even here in the industrial Lehigh Valley. "They know things are changing, and they'd better change with it," he says. "Liberal Democratic groups may not embrace me, but what choice do they have? They can either walk away and have no seat at the table or get behind me."

Labor has reconciled itself to the latter option. "We have to realize we're not going to get a lot of one hundred percent people anymore," says Ed O'Brien, who runs the eastern Pennsylvania region for the United Steelworkers and enthusiastically backs Afflerbach. "It's not as easy a district for the Democrats as it used to be." O'Brien thought of running for Congress himself, and local union leaders, at a series of meetings in January, also discussed backing Janice McElroy, Afflerbach's primary opponent. But they decided Afflerbach was the only one who had a chance, and the unions gave him their endorsements and their PAC money.

Mary Crawford, the National Republican Congressional Committee's communications director, charges that the DCCC has "gone into the swing districts and literally muscled out some of the Democratic candidates who were from the mainstream of the Democratic Party." And she's right. Although officially neutral in Democratic primaries, the DCCC has indeed been doing an unusual amount of meddling in the last few months.

In California's first district, the DCCC encouraged Michela Alioto—who in 1996 lost to a Republican who made an issue of her opposition to the death penalty—not to challenge its preferred candidate, Mike Thompson, who is pro-death penalty, a free-trader, and a hunter. In Kentucky's Fourth District, outside Cincinnati, Ken Lucas felt the party was boosting him and ignoring his primary opponent, even though Lucas is hardly running as a Democrat. On social issues, Lucas says, "there isn't a dime's bit of difference" between him and his Ralph Reed-tutored Republican opponent, Gex Williams. And, on economic issues, the Republican "is to our left," brags Lucas, who counts contributions from Banc One, Coca-Cola, Ashland Oil, and the homebuilders' association in his $300,000 war chest of mostly Republican money. Nor does he promise loyalty. Asked whether he would support a Democrat for speaker, he deflects the question. Asked whether he'd support Gephardt for speaker, Lucas replies, "I just like to leave my options open."

Perhaps there are certain answers the Democrats don't want to know just yet. At the moment, they've got a group of candidates who can raise money, get elected, and, just possibly, win their majority back. When Kentucky's Ken Lucas first visited the DCCC in Washington and passed around his resume, "the guy threw it back across the table and said, 'We kill for people with resumes like these,'" says Lucas, a 64-year-old financial consultant and county judge-executive. No wonder. Lucas, after three trips to Washington, is piling up checks from groups that usually go to candidates with the letter "R" after their names. On his most recent visit, he called on the National Association of Funeral Directors, a financial services company, and the American Council of Life Insurance. Last time, it was the realtors' and homebuilders' associations.

Bob Doyle, his fund-raiser, says Lucas has raised almost triple the funds of his Republican opponent. Lucas had an opponent in the primary, but the DCCC, despite its official vow of neutrality, helped Lucas tap crucial Democratic sponsors, Lucas says. No dummy, Lucas knows why the party likes him. "I'm the kind of Democrat who can get elected," he says. Never mind his political views. For the Democratic Party, having a contender in Kentucky's Fourth District this year is achievement enough. "Traditional wisdom says this is a Republican district," Lucas says. But that shouldn't frighten him. Traditional wisdom would say Lucas is a Republican, too. •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Pilgrim's Progress

Sometimes the most interesting aspect of a Western is in a contradiction: the story is supposed to predominate, but the immensity of the landscape overpowers the petty mortal doings within it. This is almost true of **The Horse Whisperer** (Touchstone), Robert Redford's new film. The screenplay made from the Nicholas Evans best-seller by Eric Roth and Richard LaGravenese is essentially formulaic (though it strives for modernity); and the formula seems Lilliputian against the majestic setting—Montana in this case.

First praise then, to Robert Richardson, the cinematographer. Richardson, who did such fiercely incisive work in *JFK* and *Nixon*, is masterly again in this utterly different environment. He puts before us some reaches of Montana that are more than gorgeous; they haunt us with loss. The price that most of us pay for the stimulation of cities is the loss of that air and of the quiet awesome splendor. This loss is in fact one theme of the film, and it is better expressed by Richardson than by the script or the actors.

Redford obviously chose this material because it combines two of his main concerns: Western country and himself. (When I first heard the clumsy title, I thought it was *The Hoarse Whisperer.*) He has well-known interests in conservation and ecology, indirectly evidenced in such films that explore Western space as *Jeremiah Johnson* and *A River Runs Through It*; and he also understands his screen persona. He hasn't always chosen wisely for himself (e.g. *Legal Eagles* and *Havana*), but mostly he has kept that persona well groomed. In this new role he doesn't seem to have put on cowboy clothes, they seem to be what he has always worn.

His character, Tom Booker, is called on to save the morale of a 14-year-old girl, Grace, and the useful life of her horse, Pilgrim, who were in a horrible accident together back East where she lives. She lost the lower part of her right leg. (The screenplay takes about half an hour to establish the problem, which could have been done by flashback in ten minutes.) Grace is the daughter of smart New Yorkers. Her mother, Annie (Kristin Scott Thomas), is a top magazine editor; her father, Bob (Sam Neill), is a big lawyer. Annie reads an article about Tom Booker and his exceptional skill with horses. She phones him and asks for his help with her disconsolate daughter and the traumatized horse. Tom declines. Nonetheless, Annie puts Pilgrim in a trailer and Grace in the Range Rover and drives out to Tom's place in Montana.

We all know how it's going to end, at least as far as Grace and Pilgrim are concerned. Would a star like Redford choose a story in which he failed a challenge? And how could he possibly not melt when he saw the little girl? We also know that something must develop between Tom and Annie simply because she is there on his native ground, with him being large and competent and a heroic horse-breaker. (Writing recently about the new Cormac McCarthy novel, Sara Mosle said of horse-breaking: "It has a sexy subtext. If cowboys can do this for horses, imagine what they can do for *women.*")

Tom's partner on his ranch is his brother, who is married and has three children. Grace and Annie, along with Pilgrim, are gradually accepted on the place. And Tom takes enough time from the cattle that are his real business to deal with Pilgrim. One day, while Annie is watching Tom work with Pilgrim, her cellular phone trills; the horse is startled and runs away into the middle of a great field. Tom hunkers down in the field many yards away and spends the whole day just waiting for the horse to gentle himself and come back to him. The contrast between Eastern hustle, ticked by that phone, and Western tempo, is nicely drawn.

All the Bookers except Tom are cut from old-time homespun. We even get a homespun touch of old Ma Booker when she visits. (Played by Jeanette Nolan, who once was Orson Welles's Lady Macbeth.) Their simple, unflecked honesty underscores the country-city dichotomy of 19th-century romance and melodrama: country folk are good, city folk are questionable.

Tom is more of a mixture. He once lived in Chicago studying engineering, though why he gave it up is not revealed. There he met and married a cellist. They divorced because she wouldn't live on the ranch, but, through her, he discovered that his favorite music is the Dvorak cello concerto. This point is dropped in so that, when we are tempted to think of him as simply an archetypal cowboy—later on, adoring Grace asks, "Aren't you afraid of anything?"—we can remember

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Bulworth. *Warren Beatty stars in, and cowrote and directed, this fireworks display about a U.S. Senator who suddenly speaks some truths about race. The transitions are weak, but the material between them is biting and funny. (Reviewed 6/8/98)* **He Got Game.** *About basketball. Though Spike Lee's screenplay is hokey, his directing is fine. And Denzel Washington is at his best. (6/1/98)* **Wild Man Blues.** *A documentary about Woody Allen's tour of Europe as a clarinetist with a jazz group. More appealing than some of his fiction. (5/11/98)* **Wilde.** *Stephen Fry is first-rate in this skillful rendering of Oscar's sex life and the trials that resulted from it. (5/18/98)*—**SK**

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that Tom is more than that; he likes Dvorak.

When Pilgrim is just about restored to use and Grace to composure, and when Tom and Annie are right on the edge of an affair, her husband turns up. Bob senses much but says nothing; and he takes Grace back East, leaving Annie to decide whether to stay there with Tom or to bring Pilgrim home in the trailer. The finish is a reminder of *The Bridges of Madison County.*

Redford directed—the first time he has directed himself, which may be why the picture goes on for 168 minutes. Still, he made the most of himself as a figure, if not as an actor. Now in his 60s, it's insufficient to say that he doesn't look it. He is the perfect New Age cowboy, taking the tradition into literate awareness and wit. The role doesn't ask for much variety—he keeps doing the same things over and over—but he does them well.

Most of the stressful acting falls to Grace, played by Scarlett Johansson, who was impressive two years ago in *Manny and Lo.* Aided by her director, she gives substance to all the successive stages of Grace, the dejection, the hatred of herself and her very existence, her restoration by Tom and his world.

Presumably Redford cast a Brit, Scott Thomas, and an Australian, Neill, as Grace's parents to italicize their difference from Montana. Scott Thomas, however, in contrast to her previous work, seems spindly and thin, a bit uncomfortable. Neill, sometimes persuasive in the past, is nondescript.

Director Redford was wise to assign the leading role to Montana. And, helped by good editors, he has given smart immediacy to the sequences with Pilgrim. Some doubling and some other devices were probably used, but we are smacked right up against horse flesh. Curiously, Redford sometimes uses close-ups of Pilgrim's eyes—one eye or the other—though they don't really tell us much. Even more curiously, a few shots seem subjective, as if we were meant to see the moment through Pilgrim's eyes.

Most of the time Redford skirts the corniness that lay in wait along the predictable story line, and in one moment he is gratifyingly subtle. When at last the restored Grace is able to mount the restored Pilgrim and trot around the corral, Redford doesn't make the music swell à la Hollywood. It is reticent, tinkly. Congratulations and thanks. •

The Mouse That Roared

BY JACKSON LEARS

The Magic Kingdom: Walt Disney and the American Way of Life by Steven Watts

(Houghton Mifflin, 526 pp., $30)

Sometimes cultural significance can be carried in simple containers. Consider the Autopia ride at Disneyland, which was meant to be a major magnet when the original theme park opened in 1955. Autopia was a freeway for miniature cars and child drivers. Walt Disney believed it would teach kids how to be responsible adults behind the wheel. Within two weeks after the opening, however, only six cars were driveable; the rest were battered hulks. Rather than cruising responsibly, the children had turned their vehicles into violent bumper cars, delightedly chasing and slamming into each other at high speed. And so Autopia was redesigned—first mechanically, then electronically—to prevent the cars from leaving their tracks. (A few intrepid young drivers still staged rear-end collisions.) The juvenile anarchists, having briefly subverted Disney's didactic intent, were ultimately reined in by the technological sophistication of his "imagineers."

The story of Autopia captures a profound change within the Disney company—a movement from the exuberant unpredictability of the early cartoons to the orchestrated spectacle of the gargantuan theme-parks. Throughout the '50s and '60s, the imagineers moved relentlessly forward, promoting the vision of managed fun that energized the developing Disney empire. The quintessential product of the empire would be not fantasy, but simulated reality; not the cartoon character, but the "audio-animatronic" robot.

Walt Disney had once been involved with a different sort of animation. He had even been a bit of an anarchist him-

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self; or at least he had surrounded himself with the anarchic sensibilities of the animators at the Disney Studios in the 1930s, men who would have cheered and probably joined the disobedient children at Autopia. The company had created a surreal cast of characters in an oddly compelling parallel universe. Walt Disney was its impresario. By the 1950s, however, the characters were still around, but they were being crowded to one side by a more uplifting agenda: a string of movies celebrating American folk icons from Johnny Appleseed to Davy Crockett; a television series featuring visits to Fantasyland but also, with increasing frequency, to Adventureland and Tomorrowland; and Disneyland itself, where perky young people guided great hordes through a synthesized, sanitized version of America's past, present, and future. The mammoth "Florida Project," which included Disney World and EPCOT Center, was only a few years away.

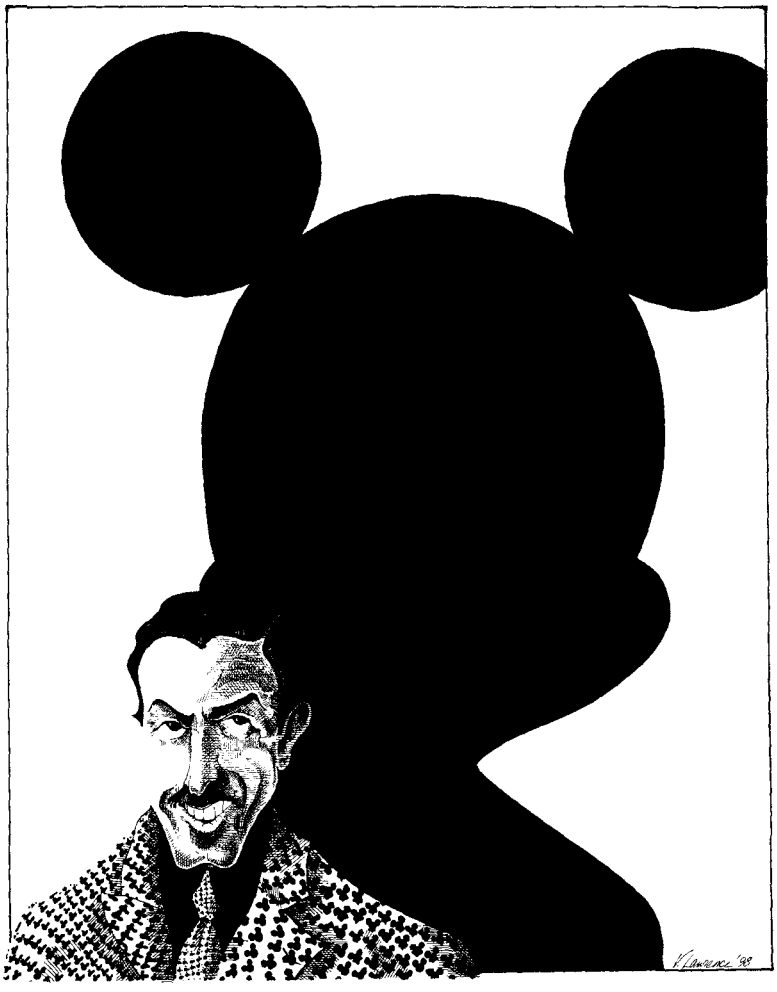
Fantasy did not disappear from the Disney enterprises; it merged with technocratic triumphalism, which was America's official creed by the middle of the century. The imagineers' slogan—"If we can dream it, we can do it!"—perfectly captured the blend of positive thinking, sentimental futurism, and pragmatic Americanism that has been common to many cultural forms during our recent history: presidential pronouncements and General Electric commercials as well as disembodied chants at EPCOT Center. Walt Disney began by challenging cultural hierarchies, but he ended by reaffirming them. He became another mellifluous voice of corporate authority.

Assessing Disney's significance is a risky business. The specter of banality stalks the enterprise, as it does any inquiry into recent American mass culture: too many "texts" are familiar, formulaic, and (in Disney's case) virtually inescapable. It is hard to say anything interesting about products that have been test-marketed for inoffensiveness. Critics leave themselves vulnerable to parody—or worse, to self-parody, as in the heavy-breathing titles of papers at cultural studies conferences. Maybe the most persistent problem is the demented dualism of critical discussion, which breaks down along a predictable division between the modern and the postmodern. Anyone who wants to make sense of the entertainment industry is forced to choose between the portentous misanthropy of mass-society theory and the airhead irony of avant-pop.

Whether they rail against the Disneyfication of classics or feel the pulse of the people in the Mickey Mouse Club Song, commentators on Disney are often imprisoned by a false assumption of continuity. Many are unable to see the Disney Company's present as anything but the inevitable outgrowth of its past. For decades it has been difficult to look beyond the theme-park vista, the painfully dumbed-down versions of Winnie the Pooh, or the more recent movies whose blandness is barely relieved by the hip multiculturalism of the Eisner Era. Surrounded by schlock, it has become easier to forget the mad originality and the genuine hilarity of animation's Golden Age.

Yet the products of that period—the great cartoons from *Steamboat Willie* (1928) to *Dumbo* (1942)—pervaded childhood experience at least through the 1950s, and they have periodically revitalized cartooning down to the present. The enchanted cartoon universe was reduced to comparatively marginal status in the Magic Kingdom of the theme-park era. Yet traces of that universe have survived—faint reminders of the Disney Company's avant-garde origins, and of the contradictory impulses in its founder's psyche.

Steven Watts catches those contradictions, and that is one of the strengths of his very fine book. He recognizes how long and how completely the vast Disney organization remained an extension of nineteenth-century proprietary capitalism, with a single despotic patriarch at the helm. Disney's personal quirks suffused the corporation and its products. He lurched from benevolence to cruelty; he wanted to be one of the boys while retaining absolute authority; he celebrated the free play of the imagination while demanding incessant productivity and bottom-line results. It should come as no surprise that he was hated and loved in equal measure by his employees (sometimes by the same person), or that the products of his company could combine innovative form and frozen piety.



WALT DISNEY BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Watts reconstructs the extraordinary trajectory of Walt Disney from a miserable, mobile childhood in the Midwest and California, to his struggle for success in the chaotic field of animated films during the 1920s, and on to the adoring throngs, *Time* covers, and iconic status of the 1930s. By the end of the decade, only Chaplin rivaled Disney's acclaim among popular artists. Still, as Watts makes clear, Disney's achievements depended on his ability to surround himself with artists more talented than he was—or at least more facile with brush and pen. Watts brings these gifted animators out from their boss's shadow, where they labored in obscurity for years until (as often happened) their brilliance dissolved in puddles of alcohol.

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Walt Disney was an inspiring and infuriating employer. His vision and his energy helped to create a Golden Age of animation, and his arbitrary authoritarianism helped bring it to an end, by provoking an animators' strike in 1941. The Disney Company would never be the same. The strike accelerated its transformation from a purveyor of idiosyncratic fantasy to a custodian of official values. Disney himself was embittered, isolated, more inclined to cranky conservatism than to the sentimental populism he had cultivated during the Depression. After the war he became a central figure in the corporate reclamation of the national mythology, the redefinition of the American Way of Life from a vague populism to an equally murky notion of free enterprise.

Watts understands that the changes in Disney reflected broader tendencies in American culture: the coming of the Cold War and the post-war Pax Americana; the spread of a well-paid working population; the transformation of leisure into consumption (though he tends to confuse this development with the rise of "hedonism"). Relying on corporate archives and on numerous interviews, as well as on published sources, Watts recreates Disney himself as well as some of the fascinating figures around him. His book convincingly places Disney where he and his company belong: at the center of twentieth-century American cultural history.

It is difficult to imagine a more balanced, comprehensive, and thoughtful treatment of a controversial man, whose career too often evokes either schmaltz or sneers. Unfortunately, Watts's book sometimes displays the defect of its virtues. His determination to be fair-minded can lead him to qualify judgments out of existence. His excessive use of the adverb "rather" is symptomatic. Disney's aesthetic concerns were "rather diffuse"; the drawing in *Music Land* (1935) was "rather realistic"; a *Wall Street Journal* reporter was "rather awestruck" by Disney's Burbank studios; and so on. The quest for judiciousness leads to a rather tame assessment of Disney's later work and its cultural consequences.

Disney World and Disneyland, whatever else they may be, are monuments to the enterprise at the heart of managerial capitalism: the containment of carnival, the marriage of fun and profit. The theme-parks' symbolic economy epitomizes the dynamic equilibrium of production and consumption during the prosperous mid-century era, when Disney planned them. They embody the utopian vision of mid-century American consumer culture, a steady-state system where no desire is stimulated that cannot be satisfied, where the passionate and singular aspiration is forbidden. In this have-a-nice-day ethos, one longs to see the stiletto unsheathed, the insipid movies cut to ribbons, the robots dismembered and scattered.

And such an attitude is what Walt would expect from the intelligentsia that (he came to feel) had betrayed him. By the late 1940s and early 1950s, the critics who had celebrated his earlier work fell silent or lamented the loss of his company's collective genius. Watts's evidence reveals what his tone sometimes conceals: the critics were on to something. With only a few exceptions, the later work was safe and boring. The imaginations of the animators were subordinated to a huge apparatus of engineering and marketing. The exhilarations of originality had disappeared.

But there was one continuity between the earlier Disney and the later Disney, and this was the attempt to create a cultural space where people could experience, however briefly, freedom from fear. Critics of Disney's sentimentality have overlooked its origins in the emotional climate of the Great Depression. The dominant response to the economic collapse of the early 1930s was, as Franklin Roosevelt brilliantly recognized, "stark unreasoning terror." Disney sensed it, too. Around the middle of that dark decade, his turn toward sentimental realism channeled the craziness of animation toward containment in popular formulas; the animators' upsetting of the natural and social order was followed by an implicit reaffirmation of conventional reality.

From animated features to live action films, hyper-realist theme-parks, and audio-animatronics, Disney's pursuit of the fake real remained a constant theme throughout his career. He always wanted to create a fantasy so compelling in its details it would be mistaken for reality. The results were wildly popular, for reasons that remain obscure. One possibility, though, is that it was precisely the safety and the banality of the theme-parks that lay at the heart of their appeal. Perhaps audiences craved ontological reassurance—the feeling that the conventional order of things could be relied upon after all. (This order included the assumption that Americans have always been the nicest people on earth.) What has most struck perceptive observers of Disney World, in a potentially anxious atmosphere of long lines and milling crowds, is the absence of fear.

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moral dislocation, the calamities of fate. Maybe loneliness. Maybe nothing, the fear of which Hemingway was exploring at about the same time Roosevelt was rallying Americans against the fear of fear. Perhaps Disney's self-contained universe has provided "a clean, well-lighted place" for middle-class Americans who (like the Spanish waiter in Hemingway's story) need "a certain cleanness and order" to keep a nameless dread at bay.

Disney would have scoffed at such an argument. Yet it illuminates his own intentions even more surely than those of his audience. Disney's need for reassurance was profound and unappeasable. His patriarchal control ensured that his company's projects would reflect his yearnings. Rarely has a such a huge corporation reflected one man's psyche for so long. Disney's clean, well-lighted place was an imaginary nineteenth-century American village. His vision of settled community on "Main Street, U.S.A." was a product of his yearnings for a connectedness that he never experienced. His dedication to family fun was rooted in reaction against the emotional impoverishment of his childhood. His own experience on Main Street was anything but idyllic. What Walt wanted most was to tell himself (and anyone else who would listen) that life made sense, that everybody belonged, that everything was going to be O.K.

Walter Elias Disney was born in Chicago in 1901, the fourth son of Elias and Flora Disney. His parents were pillars of the local congregational Church; they named Walt for their minister. Flora was the children's secret confrère; the one who slipped them the bread butter-side down at dinner, concealing the extravagance from the obsessively frugal Elias. He was one of those pathetic characters who haunt the edges of American economic history, a mix of righteousness and entrepreneurial scheming, aggression and timidity. A part-time preacher, as well as a carpenter and a small-time building contractor, Elias Disney was a petty authoritarian, frustrated by his mediocre fate.

He gave his young son a hell of a time. And Walt felt decidedly mixed emotions about this man who sometimes went after him with a hammer and saw. When he was fourteen, the son finally fought back, grabbing the father's wrist when he raised his arm to strike him. The whipping was finished, and so was Elias. Walt was confused and anguished; and the more successful he became in the new world of the entertainment industry, the wider the abyss opened between him and his father.

As Watts observes, Elias epitomized the nineteenth-century "producer culture" that celebrated thrift and distrusted display. Like other producerists, Elias was a socialist. He had been dragged into the market, but he remained distrustful of its injustice and instability. When he visited his son's Burbank studio in 1939, Elias repeatedly asked what the buildings could be "used for." Walt finally puzzled it out: his father was wondering how they could be liquidated in the event of bankruptcy.

In counseling constraint amid abundance, the old man was not only articulating producerist values. He was also recalling his own economic defeats. When Walt was five, Elias decided to take up farming in Marceline, Missouri. It was the happiest part of Walt's childhood, a rural idyll—at least in his memory—brought to an end by the auctioneer's hammer, when the farm failed four years later. Then it was off to Kansas City, where Walt barely endured his job as a newspaper boy. In 1917, when Elias followed the investment opportunity of a lifetime to the O-zell Jelly Company in Chicago, Walt stayed behind for the summer, selling peanuts and drinks on the Santa Fe Railroad. He glimpsed freedom, then faked his way into the ambulance corps and served as a noncombatant in France and Germany, where he took up smoking, drinking, and card playing, but remained chaste, and regularly sent money home to his parents.

Still, he was on the way out their door. Already, as an adolescent (according to Watts), Disney had revealed the contours of his character: his penchant for goofy gags (making his mother's pots rise with a hidden air bladder); his zest for entrepreneurial confidence games (selling fake German army helmets to unsuspecting souvenir hounds in Kansas City); his hatred of poverty and physical labor ("I never had any real play time," he complained of his years as a newspaper boy); and above all his recoil from the flux, the dislocation, and the coldness of life with his father. "I want to have ten kids and let them do whatever they want," he often told his younger sister.

Disney was always something of a kid himself, craving ice cream sodas and goopy desserts, serving them up to friends at the soda fountain that he had built in his basement. He was never that keen on adult relationships with women, especially sexual relationships. As early as his wartime letters home, his ambivalence toward women surfaced: they may have been motherly emblems of warmth, but they were also treacherous carriers of venereal disease. Like Twain's Hannibal, Disney's Marceline remained his rural Eden, the prepubescent paradise where a boy could remain a boy, a lovable scamp, all his life, and never have to mess with girls. Yet Watts is right to remark upon a powerful irony: Disney's own career was a part of the process that put Marceline and its world on the path to extinction. He joined Henry Ford and John D. Rockefeller in sentimentalizing the village that they helped to destroy.

Since his high school days, Disney had been drawn toward cartooning and vaudeville theatrics; animation eventually merged the two. As he matured, animated cartoons came of age, too. During the 1910s, the cartoonist Winsor McCay brought comic strips from page to screen, in such films as *Gertie the Dinosaurus* and *Bug Vaudeville.* In 1919, a Paramount animator named Otto Messner created the Chaplinesque Felix the Cat, the sort of humanized animal whose distinctive and winning personality embodied the future of commercial success in the field. By this time, animation techniques were becoming more sophisticated and standardized; production costs were rising. Small producers had to hustle just to stay afloat.

In gravitating toward animation, Disney was choosing a vigorous young art form that was also a ruthless business. In 1919 he formed his first company, Laugh-O-Gram Films, in Kansas City. It limped along for a year and a half, barely able to pay its own staff more than half their wages. Laugh-o-Gram produced *Alice's Wonderland*, a portent of things to come in its linkage of animation and live action, but a financial flop. Disney pressed on, reduced to living in his office, eating beans from a can. Finally he fled to southern California, determined to start a career as a live-action film director.

After weeks of moping aimlessly around studio lots, he decided to return to animation. He bought himself some stationery, had an impressive letterhead printed on it, and began to solicit business in letters that made fictitious claims regarding a creative staff and production center. The scam worked. Disney conjured up a clientele. With his brother Roy as the prudent bookkeeper and his Kansas City friend Ub Iwerks as the chief animator, Disney turned his energy toward the overall direction of the animation enterprise called Disney Bros. The company quickly became an extension of Walt's personal identity. He announced to Roy in 1925 that Disney Bros. was no more. From then on, the name would be Walt Disney Studios.

The first Disney character, Oswald the Rabbit, was appearing in theaters all over the country in 1928 when Disney's

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distributor hired away all his animation staff—except Iwerks—and set up a rival company. Iwerks, Roy, and Walt were forced to regroup. Out of their desperation came Mickey Mouse—a rounder, more lovable Oswald and the star of the first sound cartoon, *Steamboat Willie*, which created a sensation when it opened in New York in November 1928. Within months, the Disney group was producing some classics of early animation, including *Skeleton Dance* and the *Silly Symphonies*. When Disney's sound distributor hired Iwerks away and tried to set up a rival company, Walt dug in his heels and continued to look for good animators. By the early 1930s, he had established himself as the dominant force in the field.

There were a host of reasons for Disney's preeminence. Watts summarizes many of them when he says that "Disney had a visceral instinct for the rhythms and emotions of mass culture." This led to a distinctive Disney aesthetic, which shaped the studio's output into the early 1940s. Watts aptly characterizes it as "sentimental modernism." The modernism drew on the rhythms of mass culture, the sentimentality drew on its emotions. In the 1930s, the rhythms of mass culture were still powered by vernacular energies: vaudeville pratfalls, hot jazz. This was the energy beloved by modernists like Stuart Davis, William Carlos Williams, and Walt Disney.

The cartoons that were produced by Disney—and his leading animators, Ub Iwerks, Norm Ferguson, Fred Moore, and Bill Tytla—melded formal innovation and familiar entertainment. In *Blue Rhythm* (1931), Mickey Mouse bangs out some ragtime piano tunes until the keys get so excited they jump off the keyboard, and a sinuous Minnie Mouse wails the blues; the whole scene becomes a bizarre re-creation of a vaudeville song-and-dance routine. In *The Whoopee Party* (1932), a genteel gathering of Mickey and his animal friends grows boisterous and eventually goes berserk amid frenzied music and dancing furniture. The animators' symbolic universe evoked the fluid forms of surrealism, the dream-state of perpetual transformation, where everything contains the possibility of becoming something else.

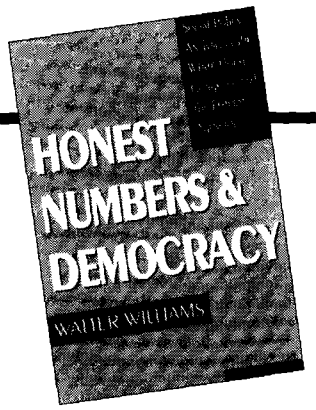
The early films crossed cultural boundaries and challenged conventional categories. As one critic remarked, the *Silly Symphonies* allowed an audience, for the first time, to "see and hear a six-legged spider pounding out Schubert's 'Liebestraum' on a babygrand piano or a pelican rattling off the Anvil Chorus from 'Il Trovatore' on the bony skeleton of a giraffe...." Mingling high art and popular art, the animators also married sight and sound. The synaesthetic tendency culminated in *Fantasia* (1938), which Disney hoped would create a novel audience experience: "hearing the pictures and seeing the music."

In 1940, the Soviet filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein caught the essence of Disney's appeal. He wrote that the cartoons were a magnet for people "who are shackled by hours of work and regulated moments of rest, by a mathematical precision of time, whose lives are graphed by the cent and the dollar." Disney's films offered them the limitless play of the imagination, "a revolt against partitioning and legislating, against spiritual stagnation and greyness."

What Eisenstein had not discerned, though, was that this carnival of experiment was gradually combined with reassuring sentiment. It was also increasingly structured by narrative realism, especially in the feature-length films. Disney inflected these ingredients with a populist idiom that combined Depression-era cultural conventions with his own attachment to producerist values. Thus Snow White celebrated "the triumph of the underdog, the value of hard work, and the virtues of community among common people." Pinocchio criticized moneylust and permissive childrearing, exalting the pre-industrial alternative of Geppetto's village, where (according to Disney's directions) "everything is little, little, old, old—very humble." Dumbo explored the plight of the little guy who is excluded and humiliated until he makes common cause with other outsiders: particularly the jive-talking crows who provide the big-eared baby elephant with advice, encouragement, and a magical white feather to help him fly. They also provide the best scene in the film. Here, as elsewhere in the best of early Disney, lumps of sentimentality were leavened by vernacular vitality and aesthetic ingenuity.

By the early 1940s, Disney had scaled the heights. He had received honorary degrees from Harvard, Yale, and the University of Southern California. He had been the subject of a scholarly book by a Harvard art historian named Robert Feild (who was later denied tenure, presumably for slumming). He had been called a "visionary genius" and a "St. Francis of the silver screen, worshipping God in all His happy, glowing, stumbling creatures."

Along the way he had managed to find himself a wife, Lillian Bounds Disney, a pretty young Idaho woman who had taken a job as an inker at the Disney Bros. studio in 1923. In many ways she became the traditional helpmate, but



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she refused to be cowed by her husband, remained jealous of his work and fame, and told him straightforwardly when she thought he was being a fool. Disney came to value her honesty. Their marriage evolved into what Watts calls "a comfortable but not passionate relationship." Her comparative coldness toward their two daughters may have stemmed from the pain and frustration of her repeated efforts to bear Walt a son, all of which ended in miscarriages.

The couple's absence of passion was mutual. Walt remained obsessed by his lack of a son, straitlaced about sex, and suspicious and dismissive toward women in general. "I love Mickey Mouse more than any woman I've ever known," he once told one of his executives. He fidgeted through family vacations, social occasions, and holidays, impatiently awaiting the chance to return to the studio. Under these circumstances, it seems appropriate that Lillian hardly appears in Watts's biography until near the end. She was an afterthought to Walt, too, for most of their life together.

What really mattered to him was the world of men at his studio. One critic compared it hyperbolically to Rembrandt's: the journeyman did the drawings that the master finished and signed. But this was profoundly misleading. The Disney studio was as committed to the rationalization of productivity as to the cultivation of fantasy. Visitors were often perplexed by the atmosphere that this combination produced. According to a writer in *The Atlantic Monthly* in 1940, the Disney studios were "as severely gay as a World's Fair model, as immaculate as a hospital, and as functional as a research scientist's dream laboratory."

The place was pervaded by a spirit of ruthless self-criticism, manic ingenuity, and precisionism. It was variously described as a "slightly frenetic college campus," "a genial madhouse," and a "democratic, collective, creative paradise." The last description is the most problematic. Disney wanted the illusion of democracy—he insisted employees call him "Walt"—but the realities were different. His top animators worked under excellent conditions, but the inkers and other less-skilled workers were kept on a Taylorized treadmill, in poorly ventilated basements. And the hijinks were not always unambiguously funny, especially to the butt of the joke: Disney once secretly filmed Iwerks's fumbling courtship of a woman employee whom he admired, then showed the film to the assembled staff at lunch the next day, while Iwerks fumed in embarrassed silence.

The animators' own jokes, such as their pornographic cartoons of Snow White and the dwarves, often required the absence of the prudish boss—unless the humor was scatological. Walt could talk about turds for fifteen whole minutes, as subordinates squirmed in silence. The temptation to crude psychoanalysis is strong, and Watts resists it, though he does point out that scatology was the one area in which Disney allowed himself rebellion against Victorian decorum. What Watts might have added was a further connection: between Walt's anal preoccupations and his commitment to create a completely controlled theme-park environment.

Despite his obsessions with control, Disney's work ethic was not grim plodding. It was relentless enthusiasm, punctuated by devastating dismissals of work that he thought inferior. As one employee said, "Walt always told [an artist or story man] he was a dumb shit and didn't know his ass in front of everybody else. And this would completely deflate your pride and your ego and he knew it." He held himself and everyone around him to an "ethos of constant improvement." This could wear people out; Walt himself suffered two "nervous breakdowns" from overwork in the '30s.

Still, the weather at the Disney studio could also motivate its artists and its artisans to achieve extraordinary things. The motivational mix of browbeating and manic enthusiasm comes across in a memo that Disney wrote to Iwerks in 1928, during the early marketing of Mickey Mouse: "Listen, Ub. Show some of your old SPEED. Work like hell BOY. It is our one BIG CHANCE to make a real killing. Forget a lot of the fancy curves and pretty looking drawings and devote your time to the ACTION. You can do it—I know you can....GIVE HER HELL." This worked at the time, but two years later Iwerks was gone. He was fed up, perhaps, with belittling jokes as well as relentless pressure.

Yet many other top animators remained devoted to Disney, even as their talents were eclipsed by the studio's growing emphasis on realism. Ferguson and Moore fit a characteristic pattern: early peaks, heavy drinking, rapid decline. But they still believed Disney had been the catalyst for their best work. So did Tytla, who told a reporter in 1940: "You know, you and I have seen some outfits that had it. They had something. The thing here is like that—you know, you can't help feeling that you're going to grab that goddam Holy Grail." Like other animators, Tytla felt he was part of a unique organization with an exalted purpose.

By the early 1940s, that feeling was increasingly confined to the older men, the elite who had been on board from the beginning. As the organization grew, the iron law of oligarchy began to assert itself. Younger animators experienced the company as a more impersonal place, the boss as a more remote figure whose arbitrary and sometimes dictatorial practices were less tolerable to them than to their elders. Inkers, colorists, carpenters, and other craftsmen had never experienced a Golden Age. Disney's haphazard paternalism made for a grossly unfair salary structure, with ten-year veterans paid less than beginners on the same job. He gave no screen credits to anyone but himself. Small wonder that, when union organizers came calling, the Disney employees were willing to listen. They struck in June 1941.

The walkout split the Disney workforce between scabs and strikers, and between the conservative America Federation of Labor and the radical Screen Cartoonists Guild. It also soured the relationship between Disney and Tytla, one of two senior animators who joined the strikers. Once during the strike the two men met by accident at a local diner and began to make some awkward gestures toward reconciliation, until Walt was warned away by his attorney Gunther Lessing. A reactionary zealot, Lessing played a major part in shaping Disney's interpretation of the strike as a Communist plot; Watts casts him in a Mephistophelian role. Arbitrators finally dragged Disney into a settlement. Salaries were regularized. Screen credits were granted. But everyone knew the fun factory was dead.

Disney himself was furious and disoriented. He railed against the (mostly imaginary) Communists and their "dirty, foul" methods; he lamented the decline of democracy. His vision of a village America, formerly a backdrop for populist parables, became an emblem of lost virtue. For years his company floundered, producing such propaganda films as *Victory Through Air Power* (1943), an odd mix of animation and lectures designed to promote strategic bombing; the cartoon conclusion showed the destruction of several German dams and the entire city of Tokyo. Awful as it may have been, the film forecast the shape of things to come: the emergence of a denatured technocratic vision, the marriage of the Magic Kingdom and the national security state. The absurdist hilarity of the Golden Age resurfaced only sporadically, in the exploits of Donald Duck—an angry (if inept) individualist, a wartime counterpoint to the increasingly well-behaved Mouse.

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After the war, Disney continued to struggle until 1950, when *Cinderella* signaled the resurgence of full-length animated features. *Peter Pan* (1953), *Lady and the Tramp* (1955), and others down to *101 Dalmatians* (1964) revived the late-'30s trend toward sentimental realism. To children (I can testify) they remained enchanting. For all their treacly domesticity and their relentless reaffirmation of gender stereotypes, these movies made clear that there was life left in the genre of the cartoon.

But Disney was directing his main energies elsewhere. His turn toward realism led him beyond animation into documentaries and live-action features. *True-Life Adventures* (1948-60) yoked extraordinary nature photography with thinly veiled ideological messages about the survival of the fittest and the bourgeois virtues of the beaver. *People and Places* (1954-59) documented the march of progress by the family of man, with American technology pointing the way.

As Watts argues, Disney's commitment to the cultural Cold War shaped nearly all of his studio's films during the 1950s. *Davy Crockett* (1955) created an icon of frontier manliness. *The Swiss Family Robinson* (1961) pitted the (implicitly American and not terribly Swiss) family against the yellow peril of Asian pirates, whose attack inspires the family to near-parodic feats of ingenious improvisation: collapsible bridges, concealed pits containing carnivorous animals, coconut hand grenades, rigged crossbows. Domestic security was as important as national security. Watts demonstrates that Disney's faith in family togetherness was repeatedly pressed into the service of Cold War concerns. It should come as no surprise that he was exalted by ideologues such as Max Rafferty, and juxtaposed by *McCall's Magazine* against Stalin himself.

Only rarely did cracks appear in the ideological surface. Consider the gender roles embodied in the enormously successful television show, *The Mickey Mouse Club*. Disney's misogyny simply would not do here, in a club where half the members were girls. Nor would a didactic advocacy of domesticity, in a program striving to enshrine adventure. What emerged was a revealing and contradictory muddle. Boys were urged, in Davy Crockett's words, to "be sure you're right, then go ahead"—perhaps into the FBI, which one program made clear was teeming with possibilities for bright young men. In contrast to this unified male model, the Mickey Mouse Club presented girls with a more confusing set of aspirations. The girl mouseketeers, as Watts observes, "combined moral restraint and assertive displays of talent, a yen for the home and eagerness to embrace the world." In short, *The Mickey Mouse Club* encouraged girls to want contradictory things, to be the voluptuous ballerina Annette and the smart tomboy Darlene.

Whether this represented Walt's own views is an open question. By this time, certainly, the Disney studio epitomized the founder's successful merger of provincial conservatism with corporate managerialism. By the 1950s the Disney studio was perhaps the most flagrant example of that widespread phenomenon in American cultural history: the innovator presenting himself as a traditionalist, the mortal enemy of folk life declaring himself its chief defender, the capitalist tricked out as the populist.

Disney had pioneered the practice of "integrated marketing" in the '30s, using Disney characters to sell T-shirts, sweatshirts, and children's furniture, even creating the original Mickey Mouse Club, which combined a producerist creed with proliferating stuff. In the 1950s, however, Disney's marketing strategies reached new levels of integration. Moving into television was the key. The revived Mickey Mouse Club was a powerful selling engine, as were the weekly *Walt Disney Presents* and its successors. And so was Disneyland, "the Happiest Place on Earth," and Walt's enduring obsession during the 1950s.

Meanwhile his mimetic ambitions intensified. By the time he died in 1966, his efforts to fake reality had met extraordinary success. Audio-animatronics had debuted at the New York World's Fair, where the Lincoln robot stunned visitors to the Illinois Pavilion with its eerily accurate simulation of a Hollywood Father Abraham. (There had been a few wonderful moments during its development when the robot flew into fragments, spewing body parts over the heads of the fleeing imagineers.) The Florida Project was on Disney's desk. Disney World, even more thoroughly than Disneyland, would be where Disney's modern drive for mastery would achieve its postmodern apotheosis—where (in Umberto Eco's words) "the 'completely real' becomes identified with the 'completely fake,'" and technology gives us more nature than nature itself.

The central cultural projects of the theme-park era were already underway by Disney's death: the domestication of nature; the blurring of the boundaries between the real and the fake; the systematic forgetting of conflict and tragedy through the packaging of the past. The

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staggering success of those projects reveals the continuing compatibility between Disney's worldview and the relentless barrage of technophilia unleashed by multinational corporations. Things have changed since 1933. Amid the official optimism of our fin-de-siècle, the only thing we have to fear is the absence of fear itself.

JACKSON LEARS teaches history at Rutgers University and is working on a book about gambling and luck in American cultural history.

Poetical Correctness

BY HELEN VENDLER

World Poetry: An Anthology of Verse from Antiquity to Our Time edited by Katharine Washburn and John S. Major

(Norton, 1,338 pp., $45)

When I was a girl, I learned about world poetry from a book belonging to my mother. My childhood book had been compiled by Mark van Doren and published in 1928 under the title *An Anthology of World Poetry*. It progressed historically, language by language, from ancient Chinese poetry to American poetry; the last two poets included were T. S. Eliot (represented by "Prufrock," "Morning at the Window," and "The Hippopotamus") and Edna St. Vincent Millay ("Euclid alone has looked on Beauty bare"). The book had 1,274 pages of verse, and I used to take it down from the shelf and open it at random.

I confess to having liked the poems in English best. Even then, translatorese put me off; the sort of pleasure I was looking for in poetry originated—to borrow Coleridge's words—from the best words in the best order. The book introduced me to subversive poems omitted from school anthologies. Though I had already read some relatively innocuous poems of Baudelaire, I well remember the day I came across, in van Doren's big book, Allen Tate's translation of "*La Charogne*," the poem in which a couple sees a rotting female corpse by the roadside:

> The flies swarmed on that putrid vulva;
> then
> A black tumbling rout would seethe
> Of maggots, thick like a torrent in a glen
> Over those rags that lived and seemed to
> breathe....
>
> —And even you will come to this foul
> shame,
> This horrible infection,
> Star of my eyes, my being's inner flame,
> My angel and my passion!

I had no idea that there existed poems of such lurid scenery.

The idea of translation began to take on refinement in me, as I compared the English translations to their originals in the languages that I knew, approving of Longfellow's excellent version of Saint Teresa's "*Nada te turbe*" ("Let nothing disturb thee") or Chesterton's successful "*Heureux qui, comme Ulysse*," while disliking distinctly less happy renditions, such as Robert Bridges's Louise Labé. ("My spirit flieth to the fairy-land of her tyrannous love; / Him then I think fondly to kiss....") I must confess that I didn't get far with most of the non-Western poetry. This was in part because its mythologies were unknown to me:

> I come! I am the Child! I am the Child!
> My hair is Nu, my face the disk of Ra,
> My eyes are Hathor, and my neck is Isis.

Reading that, I would flip forward to the Greek, and there I would find not only poems that I could understand, but also more accomplished translators.

And so I was ready to be happy when I learned that the van Doren anthology has now been updated. Translatorese dates fast (unlike the true poetry achieved by translators such as Campion or Byron); and I do not regret, on the whole, that more stripped-down modern versions have been substituted, in this new anthology, for the luxurious nineteenth-century excesses of van Doren's pages. Anyone paging through the present collection by Washburn and Major (henceforth W & M) will find modern translations that deserve to stand as poems in their own right: for instance, some of Basil Bunting's translations from the Persian, which I had not known. Here, out of the grave, is the speaking voice of Rudaki (c. 920):

> All the teeth ever I had are worn down and
> fallen out.
> They were not rotten teeth, they shone like
> a lamp,
> a row of silvery-white pearls set in coral;
> they were as the morning star and as drops
> of rain.
> There are none left now, all of them wore
> out and fell out.
> Was it ill-luck, ill-luck, a malign
> conjunction?
> It was no fault of stars, nor yet length of
> years.
> I will tell you what it was: it was God's
> decree.

Richard Wilbur's ten translations leave nothing to be desired: the most exquisite is Baudelaire's "*L'Invitation au Voyage*," with its seductive rhythm preserved. Translating Villon's "Gone Ladies" (a bad title), Christopher Logue does a nice contemporary riff on Villon's enumeration:

> Through what eventless territory
> Are Ladies Day and Joplin swept?
> What news of Marilyn who crept
> Into an endless reverie?
> ...
> Then answer me:
> Where is the snow we watched last Fall?

There are important modern foreign poems to be found here, poems that ought to form part of American literary consciousness. The reader will find such classic twentieth-century poems as Cavafy's "Waiting for the Barbarians" ("The barbarians were a kind of solution") in the elegant Keeley-Sherrard translation, and the poem on Stalin that got Mandelstam imprisoned, tersely rendered by Clarence Brown and W.S. Merwin:

> Our lives no longer feel ground under
> them.
> At ten paces you can't hear our words.
>
> But whenever there's a snatch of talk
> it turns to the Kremlin mountaineer,
>
> the ten thick worms his fingers,
> his words like measures of weight,
>
> the huge laughing cockroaches on his
> top lip,
> the glitter of his boot-rims.

There is also Paul Celan's "Death Fugue," deservedly the most famous poem of the Holocaust (attempted by many translators, and given here in Michael Hamburger's version):

> Black milk of daybreak we drink you at
> night
> we drink you at noon death is a master
> from Germany...
> he sets his pack on to us he grants us a
> grave in the air
> he plays with the serpents and daydreams
> death is a master from Germany

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your golden hair Margarete
your ashen hair Shulamith

So far so good. One cannot object to the fundamental undertaking of this anthology: to bring many poems of many languages from many centuries to the attention of modern American readers. And one is grateful to the competent translators: even though their work will age and be unsuitable, perhaps, in fifty years, they are renewing literature for half a century. (The very best translators, of course, have contributed permanent poems to the English language.) Still, I cannot help wishing that the book had been better conceived and better executed.

I will come in a moment to matters of taste. I must begin with the first absurdity attending this anthology: that there is no detailed table of contents. In the anthology of my childhood, one could see, at a glance, the author and the author's dates, the poems, the translators, and the page. Here, for instance, is the beginning of the old entry for Sappho:

SAPPHO (610 B.C.)
Ode to Aphrodite.....William Ellery Leonard 257
Ode to Anactoria.....William Ellery Leonard 258
Farewell to Anactoria.....Allen Tate 258

It doesn't seem too much to ask for a comparable table of contents in the new anthology. But no such thing exists.

Instead of a real table of contents, poet by poet, W & M give us eight grand historical sweeps (further divided into as many as twelve subcategories). Sappho, for instance, would fall under their "Part II: The Classical Empires, East and West (750 B.C.—A.D. 500)." The Greek and Roman Empires are in subheads here, together with Dravidian India and Han China. But not a single author is listed under the historical rubrics. Nor are there separate indices at the back of the book for authors and translators: instead, they are indexed together, differentiated only by roman and italic page numbers. One can't even tell from the index how many poems by Celan there are, for example, since only the number of the initial page of the selection is registered. And there is simply no way to discover, say, which French authors are included in the anthology except by paging through Parts IV (950-1450), V (1350-1625), VI (1600-1700), VII (1700-1915), and VIII (1915-).

Do the editors defend this practice? Yes, in part. They reject van Doren's arrangement (in which poems are grouped by language, arranged chronologically):

> Such a scheme has the virtue of clarity and simplicity, but it almost inevitably privileges the larger and better-known traditions, and leaves less familiar ones (African, Korean, Vietnamese, and the like) ghettoized in a way that makes them all too easy to ignore. Moreover it does not facilitate comparisons of contemporaneous poetry from different parts of the world.

Nothing in this remark explains why one would dispense with a table of contents. But the fantasy of the "walk of discovery through world poetry" envisaged by the editors is rather too ambitious for most of their putative readers:

> We see, too, how other strands bind these separate traditions together: the influence of Islam from North Africa to Indonesia, or of Buddhism from India to Japan; or how the Persian language links the Middle East with Mughal India.... Thus the connective tissue binding a poem by the twentieth-century German Bertold Brecht, a Japanese *haiku*, and a *ballade* by François Villon may become more visible.

I doubt whether a reader can deduce any such links from this anthology, which is innocent of headnotes and has only the most cursory introductory material. One couldn't work out, from these pages, how Greek literature influenced Latin poetry, let alone "how the Persian language links the Middle East with Mughal India," or what "connective tissue" could possibly reach from a *haiku* to a *ballade*.

Did van Doren's scheme really "ghettoize" "less familiar" traditions? Van Doren began with ancient Chinese, and proceeded, via Japanese and Sanskrit, to Arabian and Persian, before coming to a "more familiar" tradition, namely ancient Hebrew. Certainly his American readers of 1928 were confronted with the "less familiar" traditions of Sanskrit and Arabian and Persian the moment they opened the book. What W & M mean by "less familiar" traditions are modern non-Western literatures, as their list ("African, Korean, Vietnamese") makes clear; and these languages simply don't appear in van Doren. To be sure, there is no reason not to add translations from these languages—but was it worth parceling out French into five different sections to do so?

In keeping the national traditions together, van Doren made one able to scan the whole development of a single literature, whether Chinese or French. In W & M, by contrast, such intelligibility is sacrificed. Modern notions of the evil of ethnic or linguistic nationalism must lie behind the editors' fractioning of national literary production into widely-separated parts of their volume, just as modern notions of the death (or the unimportance) of the author (or of any human agent of literature, including the translator) must lie behind their suppression of an authorial table of contents. Instead, we are offered these "texts" in a peculiar order in which Jan Kochanowski of Poland (1530-1584)—("Where is that gate for grief which, long ago, / Let Orpheus enter the dark realm below?")—is followed within two pages by King Nezahualcoyotl of Texcoco (c. 1402-1472):

Where will I go?
Where will I go?
To the road, to the road
That leads to God.
Are you waiting for us in the
Place of the Unfleshed?

To find Poland again, one has to hunt from page 571 to page 658.

The editors' pious hope that we will enjoy this chaos of texts is phrased in the purest lisping of multiculturalism: "This anthology is evidence that all of us can feel at home in the world's diversity of cultures, and that the poetry of the world can belong to everyone." This is too easy. A responsible editor ought to explain that a very high degree of linguistic experiment is present in all original poetry; and that translation can merely approximate some of it; and, above all, that poems emerge from cultures which we understand very poorly if they are cultures far from us in time and space. It is only fair to let the reader know the pitfalls of reading in translation, even if one wants to hymn the global village.

W & M's headnotes to the individual historical sections are often laughable. I remember reading, in my youth, the introduction to an anthology of Elizabethan prose, in which the editor remarked, "In Renaissance England, the men were fecund and the women were fertile." Comparable absurdity in the service of a forced "liveliness" occurs in W & M, too. Some illustrations from their description of the Renaissance:

> Marlowe, gripped by the Faustian love of learning ... translated Ovid; Edmund Spenser was in flamboyant competition with the example of Italy.... Poets in this era of spies, informers, and fellow courtiers of dubious loyalty often took refuge in translating the past.... Street brawls, intrigues, prison, the scaffold, and early death were the material concerns of poets like Sir Walter Raleigh and the one-eyed Luis de Camões.

None of this has much to do with the true concerns of poets (one-eyed or otherwise), but it is typical of the straining for effect that is visible in the eight

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short essays introducing the various time-periods.

It is impossible to believe that these editors have any ear for language after seeing their mixed metaphors ("the ebullience of twentieth-century modernism had a dark undertow, realized in the vast tally of poets"); their misspellings ("the *Aeniad*," "a passionnate revival of the past," "a sullen provincalism," "alientated"); their misquotations ("*les sanglots longues*"); the sheer unreason of some of their sentences ("[Leopardi's] meditative final poem on the broom plant, which tenaciously survives on the slopes of Mount Vesuvius, leaves him in a heroic straddle"); and the sublime banality of other remarks ("East of the Euphrates also, the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were an era of literary change"). And the helpful hints of the editors can be entirely unintelligible. What is the reader to make of a sentence that says, "In contrast to the extreme formalism of Kalidasa's *sloka* couplets are the more relaxed poems of ... Bhartrihari," when no definition is offered either of what a "*sloka* couplet" might be (especially since the excerpts given from Kalidasa—a Sanskrit poet who lived c. 500—seem to be not couplets but quatrains) or of what the word "relaxed" might mean in this context?

There is more translatorese here (especially in the non-Western texts) than one can easily bear. The aforesaid Kalidasa (in a translation made in 1964) reads like this:

> Though quickly thou wouldst go for
> my beloved's sake, my friend, I fancy
> Thou mightst delay on this peak and that,
> fragrant with blooming kakubhas,
> As peacocks receiving thy visit utter
> loud cries of welcome
> With love-moistened eyes. Still continue
> O Cloud, and hasten on.

This goes on for six pages, a service neither to the reader nor to Sanskrit poetry.

"There are some things a man must not do to save his country," the old John O'Leary said to the young Yeats. There are some things an editor must not do to serve "representativeness," too. One of them is to use terrible translations. Another is to use a "contemporary" translation in place of an "old" one, out of a vain desire for contemporaneity. Surely, facing a choice between Longfellow's and Yvor Winters's translation of Saint Teresa's "*Nada te turbe*," anyone would choose Longfellow's version, which preserves the gentle reassurance of the original. Here is Longfellow's translation, from my old van Doren:

> Let nothing disturb thee,
> Nothing affright thee;
> All things are passing;
> God never changeth;
> Patient endurance
> Attaineth to all things;
> Who God possesseth
> In nothing is wanting;
> Alone God sufficeth.

And here is Winters, from W & M:

> Nothing move thee;
> Nothing terrify thee;
> Everything passes;
> God never changes.
> Patience be all to thee.
> Who trusts in God, he
> Never shall be needy.
> God alone suffices.

The question of taste brings up another noticeable difference between the anthologies. Early liturgical Latin poetry is entirely absent from W & M, even though Latin Christian poetry has played a dominant role in the West. Van Doren included magisterial translations by Dryden and Crashaw of the "Veni Creator, " the "Te Deum," and the "Dies Irae." W & M have turned their category "Medieval Latin Poetry, Fourth through Twelfth Centuries"—embracing eight hundred years of medieval writing—into a totally secular one. This seems to me dishonest.

There are also peculiar inconsistencies within the book. As against twenty sonnets by Shakespeare in van Doren, W & M present only five (excusing themselves in the introduction by saying, with some reason, that there are many good anthologies of English and American poetry to be had already), but here is how the five are prefaced:

> Sonnet: When I do count the clock that
> tells the time
> Sonnet: When, in disgrace with fortune
> and men's eyes
> Sonnet: Th'expense of spirit in a waste of
> shame
> Sonnet XIII
> Sonnet XVI

Now this is very peculiar, since the sonnet that W & M name "Sonnet XIII" is in fact sonnet 94 ("They that have power to hurt and will do none"); and the sonnet they name "Sonnet XVI" is in fact sonnet 106 ("When in the chronicle of wasted time"). Why the inconsistency in titling? Why the misrepresentation in numbering? Why are the sonnets out of numerical order (12, 29, 129, 94, 106)? Is anyone home? Is anyone minding the store?

I don't mind the general under-representation of English poetry, but I am baffled by many of W & M's selections. Would you represent Tennyson without mentioning *In Memoriam*? If you could print four poems by Keats, would you leave out *all* the odes? The shakiness of the editors' scholarship, incidentally, can be seen in their eccentric titling of many poems. The Keatsian fragment "This living hand"—untitled in manuscript, and perhaps intended by Keats as a speech for an unwritten play—is boldly, and with no possible justification, entitled "To Fanny Brawne." Sometimes excerpts from longer poems are entitled "From X" and sometimes they are not: the selection from Tennyson's "Maud" ("Come into the garden, Maud") is called simply "Maud." A 26-line excerpt from Pope's *Essay on Man* is entitled "The Scale of Being," and printed as if it were an independent lyric. If a reader wanted to track it down, he could nowhere in this anthology find out where it came from.

The anthology suffers from the presentism now at large in the world. I did a rough scan of how many pages are allotted to each year in each time period. The result is as follows: I, .07 pages per year; II, .12; III, .15; IV, .32; V (which, we might recall, is "The Renaissance in Europe; Late Traditional Verse from the Americas, South Asia, and East Asia (1350-1625)"), .35; VI (1600-1700), .80; VII (1700-1915), 1.00; and VIII (ourselves), 4 per year. By this count, we can infer that, according to W & M's dubious history, twentieth-century writing is twelve times better than the writing of the Renaissance, and excellence enlarges from epoch to epoch, along with literacy and an increase in population. The voice of self-congratulation then trumpets its complacencies:

> A great achievement of the twentieth century has been the creation of a genuine world literature, multivocal and proud of the distinctiveness of its many voices, but nevertheless part of one great chorus.... Such poets cross borders without dissolving the unique achievement and vividness of cultural differences.

If only it were so easy.

I do not doubt that many readers will find much to enjoy in this anthology. But why must it be so badly edited? Couldn't Washburn and Major—if they didn't know one sonnet of Shakespeare from another, if they didn't see how hideous the Kalidasa translation was, if they didn't recognize the importance of Christian Latin poetry, if they couldn't write decent introductions—find someone with some competence in poetry to save them from their errors and banalities? The list of affronts could be multiplied far beyond the scope of this review.

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But let me end with some good news, with a remarkable poem that I did not know before W & M brought it to my attention. It is by the Vietnamese poet Do Tan (born c. 1940), and it is translated by Nguyen Ngoc Bich; and it is a poem that I wish I could read in the original but can at least read, thanks to W & M, in translation. It is called "Twenty Years," and it seems to sum up the fate of innumerable people in this century:

The girl grew up to become a woman
the boy grew up to become a man
man met woman in the forbidden wood
their child was the gift of spring.

The spring child joined the revolution
the revolution was a ravening cannibal
man's portion was exile, prison, bullets,
with sun, roses, and a blood-reeking flag.

The woman weeps for the girl that was
the man weeps for the boy that was
their child sleeps the eternal sleep
in the earth
the spring hangs its head and sighs.

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The Pen and the Mask

BY MICHAEL RAVITCH

Stendhal by Jonathan Keates

(Carroll and Graf, 478 pp., $15.95)

By the time Henri Beyle died in 1842, all his grand ambitions had come to naught. His once-brilliant career as a soldier and a diplomat ended with a dull tenure as the French consul in the obscure Italian port of Civitavecchia. His other career, as a fumbling Don Juan, had long before sputtered to a halt. Ill health and loneliness plagued his last years. His novels were unpopular and neglected, and a good part of his life's work lay unpublished in his desk drawer, unfinished and fragmentary. He was so little known by his contemporaries that nearly all the obituaries got his name wrong. The only foretaste of the acclaim that would eventually surround his pen-name came two years before he died when Balzac wrote a 60-page article praising *The Charterhouse of Parma*. "You have taken pity on an orphan abandoned on the street," an astonished Stendhal wrote to the younger, more celebrated, author. "I did not expect to be read until 1880."

With Stendhal, there is always that date: the moment in the far-distant future when his work will be appreciated, the justice of posterity. The year changes, but the hope never diminishes. "I am taking a ticket in a lottery in which the biggest prize comes down to this: to be read in 1935." Or again: "I only attach importance to being printed in 1900." He had a lifelong habit of writing obituaries for himself. Twenty-one wills were found among his papers after his death. Even at the age of eighteen, he entitled his journal "Memoirs to Serve for the History of My Life," and listed the important dates in his life up to that point, as if he were preparing his obituary, or his biography.

His hopes have been justified. His fame has grown from the moment of his death, and new biographies continue to appear. The latest, by Jonathan Keates, records the vicissitudes of his life in a straightforward and readable narrative. His story reflects the drama of the age. Stendhal was six years old when the French Revolution began. As a soldier in Napoleon's army, he was responsible for provisions during the disastrous retreat from Moscow. Later he fled Milan after the Austrian police suspected him of involvement with the secret conspiracies of the Carbonari. This is not, at first glance, a pure literary existence, like Flaubert at Croisset, or Proust in his cork-lined room. Stendhal fought in wars, seduced women, traveled widely, threw himself into cultural and political controversies. His books seem a bit like happy accidents in the midst of a crowded and eventful life.

And yet with Stendhal, even more than with most great writers, we come up against the limitations of biography. The facts do not reveal the sheer strangeness of this evasive man. On the surface, he is the simplest of writers, frank and sincere, but the surface is a deception and a baffle-ment. Stendhal had a remarkable obsession with anonymity and concealment. He published work under 25 different pseudonyms; one scholar has found more than 350 aliases. He almost always signed his letters under assumed names, sometimes ridiculous, such as Cesar Bombet, Baron de Cutendre, William Crocodile, Anastase de Serpiere. Keates emphasizes practical reasons for these subterfuges, and there is no doubt that Stendhal had good cause to fear the autocratic regimes of the post-Napoleonic Restoration. Yet his disguises go beyond what political expedience would require. They provide a window to the deepest truths of his imagination.

Keates has given us a biography of Beyle, the capable administrator, the brave soldier, the fat and foolish lover, the far-sighted liberal expatriate. Keates modestly acknowledges the limitations of his approach; he intends to draw attention to the lesser-known works, the writings on music and on Italy. But Henri Beyle, nineteenth-century man of letters, is nothing more than Stendhal's most successful disguise. Keates does not quite capture Stendhal the major imagination, the author whom Nietzsche called a "human question-mark," the Stendhal who transformed the genre of the novel, the Stendhal who wrote that "speech was given to man to enable him to conceal his thoughts."

Few have written so much about their inner lives and revealed so little. Stendhal had a highly developed taste for secrecy. "I have never talked of the thing I was passionate about," he claimed. Instead he made cryptic notes in the margins of his books and on his shirt cuffs, often in code or in pidgin English. In regard to his great unrequited passion for Metilde Dembowski, for example, he records "the greatest event of his life" on September 30, 1818. But he does not elaborate, and Keates can't explain.

His autobiographical writings are fragmentary and rambling, but they are fascinating in their mixture of frankness and duplicity. If Freud ever came across *The Life of Henri Brulard*, Stendhal's "autobiography," he might have been taken aback by the blithely acknowledged Oedipal impulses. "I was in love with my mother," Stendhal writes. "I wanted to cover my mother in kisses and for there not to be any clothes." But the psychological sophistication is not as remarkable as the playful modernist tone, Stendhal's skeptical attitude toward his own capacity for self-knowledge: "I'm going to be fifty. It's high time I knew myself. What have I been? What am I? ... Was I sad by nature then? ... Have I been a witty man? Did I have a talent for anything?"

Like Rousseau, Stendhal is eager to disclose everything, even unsavory details. Unlike Rousseau, he does not care much

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about justifying himself. We are far from the redemptive structure of Augustine's *Confessions* and much closer to the ironic self-reflection of Proust or Nabokov. He does not so much tell his story as question it: the narrative emerges and dissolves at the same time. He struggles to remember images from his childhood, but many details are missing. He compares his tattered memory to frescoes in Pisa, "where you can make out an arm easily enough, but the piece next to it, which showed the head, has fallen away."

The casual style and the tone of spontaneous improvisation bewitch us. Yet the usual paradoxical complications appear. What other autobiography is written under an alias? The title page insists we are reading a novel imitated from *The Vicar of Wakefield* by one Henry Brulard. Again and again Stendhal expresses horror at "the terrible quantity of Is and Mes" that an autobiography requires. He decides that the only antidote to egotism is absolute sincerity. Yet by the end of the first chapter, we learn that he has already lied to us. He admits he did not go to the battle of Wagram, as he claimed in the first paragraph.

In his other significant memoir, *Recollections of Egotism*, Stendhal recounts his Paris years, when he first made a name for himself as a middle-aged wit and a journalist. "I entered Paris with one idea," he begins, "not to be found out." Like Julien Sorel, possibly the most paranoid protagonist in world literature, Stendhal imagined enemies at every turn. He returns again and again to his desire not to be seen, not to be known, to turn invisible at will like Angelica in *Orlando Furioso*:

> I would wear a mask with pleasure, I would change my name with delight. The thousand and one nights I adore fill more than a quarter of my brain. Often I think of Angelica's ring. My supreme pleasure would be to change into a tall blond German and wander about Paris.

Keates is occasionally exasperated by Stendhal's errors, fantasies, and lies. Large parts of Stendhal's first two books, essays on art and music, are plagiarisms. He regularly makes up quotations and blurs dates. How can he be so unreliable, for all his talk about truthfulness? Again and again we return to the great theme of his novels, the classic Stendhalian paradox: the honest hypocrite, the romantic fabulist who lies in good faith and hides in plain sight.

Stendhal is one of the great masters of negation, but in his hands disenchantment becomes an affirmation of the imagination. As with Byron, his cynicism represents an acute moment of Romanticism. He played the role of the cynical aesthete rather than the gloomy mystic or the baroque visionary. He despised the rhetorical flourishes of a figure such as Chateaubriand. From an early age, he knew the tone he sought: "simple, easy, concise." He sought to expunge any hint of literary pretension. "Classical in style, romantic in ideas" was the famous formulation from his pamphlet *Racine and Shakespeare*. The result was an unemphatic spontaneity that seems thoroughly modern.

His style has always been controversial. Henry James considered *The Red and the Black* so badly written as to be unreadable. In a famous letter to Balzac, Stendhal claimed that "in order to acquire the correct tone" he read two or three pages of the *Code Civil* every morning. Moreover, he regarded "beauty of phraseology, its roundness, rhythm, etc." as a flaw which leads to falsehoods. "Often I ponder for a quarter of an hour whether to place an adjective before or after its noun. I seek to be 1) truthful and 2) clear in my accounts of what happens in a human heart."

The result is that the novels have a freshness and a directness which translate well into the aesthetic terms of our century. They are fluid and alive like early Godard films: immediate, concrete, unformulaic. The prose is modest; its felicities have an accidental quality. From *Don Quixote* onwards, novels have made it their business to deflate romantic illusions, and Stendhal brought this irony to the level of the sentence. "I am trying extremely hard to be dry," he writes in *On Love*. "I am continually beset by the fear that I may have expressed only a sigh when I thought I was stating a truth." The style reflects this deep mistrust of language. Violent, often absurd, passions are represented through the most terse, objective language.

The narrative moves at an astonishing pace, and becomes even more elliptical at precisely the moments when other authors would be most expansive. For example, at the climax of *The Red and the Black*, when Julien Sorel is on his way to shoot Madame de Renal, we are given only a few quick details: "Julien had set off for Verrieres. On this rapid journey he was unable to write to Mathilde as he had intended; his hand made nothing but illegible scrawls on the paper."

Still, Stendhal's deepest contribution to the novel lies in the psychological complexity of his creations. He charts their emotional flux with scrupulous attention and endows them with an inwardness unprecedented in French literature. He observes how the greatest passions oscillate wildly: "There are moments in violent and unrequited love when you suddenly think you are not in love anymore." Emotions are not only fickle, they are inevitably perverse. "Always do the opposite of what is expected," Prince Korasoff advises Julien Sorel. In the world of Stendhal, this is an inescapable law.

A huge gulf opens up between intention and result, between feeling and action. On parting with Julien, Madame de Renal appears indifferent, when in fact she is too overwhelmed with love to show her affection; whereas Julien, playing the part of the passionate seducer, feels nothing. "Is being loved no more than that?" Julien thinks after their first night in bed. Excessive self-consciousness sours genuine feeling; true emotion, coming only by surprise, is overwhelming and can find no way to express itself.

This is realism; but more importantly, it is a literary discovery, the frisson of disillusion transferred to a new key. Tolstoy and Proust made this discordance an important part of their method. Tolstoy acknowledged the debt that *War and Peace* owed to the Waterloo sequence in *The Charterhouse of Parma*. The teenaged Fabrice del Dongo imagines that the French soldiers he encounters are heroic friends out of Ariosto; instead they steal his horse. The Emperor passes, but Fabrice cannot glimpse him. The battle field is utter confusion: drunken soldiers fleeing, distant sounds of cannon-fire. At the end Fabrice still doesn't know. Has he seen a battle? And was that battle Waterloo?

The dry tone brilliantly undercuts the fantasies of the Romantic imagination. But, paradoxically, Stendhal's final vision is as Romantic as any of his protagonists might have desired. Whereas Flaubert never loses the ironic flicker in his voice, Stendhal ultimately renews his faith in the rapture of self-projection. Mathilde de la Mole may be ridiculous imagining herself as Queen Marguerite, but in the end, when she buries her lover's head with her own hands, she has achieved a credible Romantic apotheosis; we are caught up in her absurdity despite our own skepticism. The mock-heroic reaches a belated, but genuine, sublimity.

Stendhal was attracted to the grotesque, the violent and the remote, the fantastic. The exotic aspect of his imagination is often discounted. Erich Auerbach argued that "the modern consciousness of reality began to find literary form for the first time" in *The Red and the Black*. The innovation, according to Auerbach, consisted in the concrete presentation of contemporary political and social conditions. This view of Stendhal as a kind of glorified sociologist can be traced back to his famous description of the novel as a

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mirror. But in fact the term "realism" has blinded us to the strangeness of his imagination.

The Charterhouse of Parma, with its farcical adventures and dramatic escapes, mixes realism with an older genre of romance. This kingdom of Parma can only be found on the same imaginary map as Shakespeare's Bohemia and Nabokov's Zembla. In *The Red and the Black*, the melodramatic plot and the epic structure are disguised by the deceptively realistic patina. Yet compared to *Madame Bovary*, which is credible in every detail, the fantastic quality of *The Red and the Black* is clear. After all, how many actual girls in 1830 buried their lovers' heads in caves, followed by thousands of peasants with candles? The realistic detail is mere thread for the romantic novelist to spin his fables.

Our interest in the seminary at Besançon, for example, where Julien studies to be a priest, does not derive from the accurate portrayal of the Jansenist schism within the nineteenth-century French church. The atmosphere of paranoia and gloom in this prison-like tower has an imaginative power independent of any given reality. It is a gothic episode, terrifying and claustrophobic. Yet Stendhal works with a light touch. He does not overwhelm us with masses of description, as a gothic novelist might; instead he focuses on the well-chosen detail, unexpected, even bizarre. So, for example, when Julien tries to master all the proper signs of devoutness, we learn that "there is, in seminaries, a way of eating a boiled egg that indicates the progress made in a life of piety." And if this owes more to Stendhal's absurd imagination than to the realities of seminary life, do we care?

Stendhal provides no realistic documentary account comparable to Flaubert's treatment of the revolution of 1848 in *Sentimental Education*. *The Red and the Black*, which purports to be "a chronicle of 1830," does not even mention the revolution of that year. He found the "bourgeois monarchy" of Louis-Phillipe as frightening and absurd as that of the Bourbon kings. Towards the end of his life, he collected old Italian chronicles; one became the inspiration for *The Charterhouse of Parma*. These melodramatic milieus, full of spies and intrigues, correspond to his inner world. Stendhal found the same elements in Bourbon France as in Renaissance Italy: deceptive courtiers, insane conspiracies, corrupt institutions, the prison and the guillotine. In every age, politics is an assault on individual dignity; history is a perpetual chaos. Yet his characters never submit passively to the encroachments of the outer world. They are the resistance, the "happy few," the ones who leap out of the tapestry, who manage to define themselves on their own terms.

The young man who dreamed of living in a Parisian garret and writing plays like Molière never abandoned his comic muse. Even the unfinished *Lucien Leuwen*, known as his most realistic novel, has a cartoonish quality. We move from the aristocratic Ultras, who throw a birthday party for the exiled King, to the corrupt bureaucracies and the fake elections of the *juste-milieu*, all depicted in an absurd light worthy of Dickens or Waugh. We meet the grotesquely pretentious lady of Parisian society, Madame Grandet, and the ambitious small-town hypocrite, Dr. Du Poirier. They are all pretenders, all motivated by vanity, that most Stendhalian of passions. Shame and humiliation threaten at every turn, the shame of dishonor, the humiliation of a crowd throwing mud at you, the constant fear of being found out.

Julien Sorel and Mathilde de la Mole are monsters of vanity, and their love affair is a grand sadomasochistic comedy. Mathilde can love Julien only so long as she believes her love is not reciprocated; she is only happy when she suffers the bliss of being disesteemed. Love is the goal of existence in the Stendhalian universe, but reciprocal love is always a missed opportunity. Almost all his characters suffer from a kind of skeptical madness which makes them constantly doubt the sincerity of their lovers. They seize upon any evidence, they credit the least suspicion, they summon up unnecessary obstacles. To be loved is to be known, and they all seek to hide. The most successful love affair, between Fabrice del Dongo and Clelia Conti, is conducted entirely in the dark, because Clelia made a vow to the Madonna that she would never set eyes on Fabrice again. "Life is simpler than that," an exasperated Zola complained about Stendhal.

Skepticism, which destroys love, also poisons self-consciousness. Julien Sorel is as suspicious of his own emotions and attitudes as he is paranoid about other people. Everything is an act, a role, a calculated performance to advance himself. He proudly identifies with Tartuffe, but Julien's talent for hypocrisy is also his tragedy. He cannot be natural, or at least he cannot know when he is natural. His delight in his capacity for self-invention does not compensate for his painful sense of inauthenticity. Ultimately, his yearning for an integrity he cannot fathom is what makes him such a compelling character.

Attempts to interpret *The Red and the Black* through the spectrum of class con-

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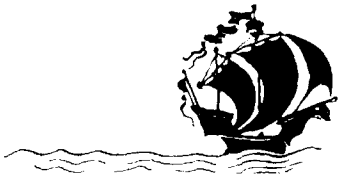

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A Phonebook Cover Hermes of the Nineteen-Forties

Naked but for the winged helmet and sandals,
He flourishes a jagged bundle of lightning
High over his head as a trophy.

His other hand at his hip grips
A thick sinuous bunch of the cable
That spirals his trunk and legs

Rooted on the North Pole, the sole
Of one sandal extending down
Over Alaska, balancing him

Solidly over the globe. Head down
And averted, under the metal brim
His eyes are invisible not through

Shyness or diffidence but a triumph
Of absorption—athletic, the slender
Thunderer surrounded by thunder

With fire zigzag in his fist. Messenger
Of light itself, he knows to
See without needing to see, acuity

And speed skimming an alphabetized
Universe of distinctions quicker
Than vision, occult: Zoroaster

And Zarathustra, The Yellow Book
And the Yellow Kid, Xanadu
To Wilno and Ventnor to Ur.

ROBERT PINSKY

flict will always fall short. A scholarship to the Polytéchnique would not have appeased Julien. Even in an egalitarian utopia, Julien would be a destructive force, an avatar of negative will. He wages war, not against society, but against reality, with the fury of a powerful imagination enraged by an unknowable world.

His will to power is matched by an equally powerful impulse to sabotage himself. Throughout the novel, he undermines his masquerades by inappropriate displays of emotion. And at the end, when he shoots Madame de Renal, he wrecks all his ambitions. Yet ruin makes him happier than success ever did. He refuses to attempt to escape from his prison cell. Only now, in conditions of stasis, can Julien begin to know himself. His sublime indifference toward his approaching death marks the triumph of his integrity.

When Stendhal was a young man, he was determined to write for the stage. He set about his task with an extraordinary deliberateness. Keates describes his frenzy: "He read eagerly among the playwrights of the past, Terence, Machiavelli, Goldoni, analysing styles, moods, effects, and night after night he visited the theaters, cramming his notebook with observations to penetrate the alchemical formulas and magna arcana of genius." He did not lock himself away like Flaubert, but it turns out that Stendhal was a literary man all along. He worked on the same play for thirty years, even carrying it from the flames of Moscow, but he never finished it. It was only well into middle age, when his career in government was a failure, his family inheritance ruined, his love life in shambles, that he found the form in which he could express his genius.

He was 43 when he published his first novel, 47 when he wrote *The Red and the Black.* All his novels teach the futility of worldly desire. Ambition always ends in ashes, but his heroes and heroines realize an authentic splendor in the amplitude of their imaginations. These characters are not just actors in a drama, they are analysts of their own passions, and they have the improvisatory gifts of great artists. This capacity for self-invention explains why, almost two centuries later, they remain vital. They investigate their emotions from every possible perspective; they are blessed with a consciousness nearly as supple as the novelist himself. You might say of Gina Pietranera, Duchess Sanseverina, the heroine of *The Charterhouse of Parma,* that she has followed Henry James's advice: she is someone on whom nothing is lost.

Such a character is easy to praise and difficult to manufacture. This was Stendhal's true mimetic genius: not so much to represent the structures of society, as to reproduce the workings of the imaginative mind. Consider the moment when Julien Sorel, in the midst of his genuinely beautiful meditations in prison, laughs at his self-seriousness: "Talking to myself all alone, with death two steps ahead, I'm still a hypocrite." Or when Count Mosca, falling in love with Gina, finds himself reluctant to enter her box at the opera, and then is amused that, at his age, he can still be as timid as a young lover.

The Duchess may be a murderess, but she has unforgettable gusto. She brings the same spontaneous passion to her life that Stendhal poured into his work. When we try to comprehend the feverish inspiration which allowed Stendhal to compose *The Charterhouse of Parma* in just 52 days, we might contemplate her spirit. This late flowering of his genius has the autumnal atmosphere of a Shakespearean romance. Beneath the exhilarating tempo and the comic-opera atmosphere lies a bitter story of loss. The Duchess never loses our sympathy, even at her most selfish, but in the end, her manipulations cannot bring her what she most desires. The book incarnates what Randall Jarrell described in another context, "the Wisdom of this World which demonstrates to us that the Wisdom of this World isn't enough." The pursuit of happiness may always reach a dead end, but Stendhal teaches us not to care: the imagination is strictly a matter of ecstasy.

Henri Beyle was a thoroughly entertaining character. His conversation was witty, his friends were gifted, he had opinions on just about everything, from opera to mathematics. But in the end, after prolonged exposure to the persona of Henri Beyle, we are left with an impression of unreality. The impossible love affairs come and go; friends are cherished, then discarded; enthusiasms cultivated, then abandoned. We begin to suspect that his fantastic show of energy might have been a ruse, that the writer, the true self, may have used the distraction of his noisy personality, like a fireworks display, to sneak away and dream in private.

These novels have not lost their power to liberate the reader's imagination. "A novel is like a violin-bow," Stendhal wrote. "The box which gives off the sounds is the soul of the reader." And their creator? Condemned to his unreal existence, waiting for the moments when his dreams would issue forth on paper, he had to pretend to be an ordinary person. Near the end of his life Stendhal composed a strange fantasy, *Les Privileges,* a contract with God in 23 clauses. The privilege-holder could turn himself into any animal, or occupy two human bodies at once. He would be invulnerable, have the eyesight of a lynx, run five leagues in an hour. He could heal suffering, divine the thoughts of the people around him, and get any woman to fall in love with him. His penis would grow erect at will. It is a kind of weird prose poem, written at the onset of old age, affirming his lifelong quest for transformation in the face of death.

One of Stendhal's final documents is a baffling notebook entitled "The Last Romance." It describes his last great pas-

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sion, inspired by an unidentified married woman given the pseudonym "Earline." Scholars debate her identity. They even question her existence. Is Stendhal recalling an old love affair? Fantasizing about a possible new one? Or are these notes for a novel? He writes with his usual proliferation of alibis, cryptograms, and secret codes. The boundary between life and fiction blurs. The dream world encroaches. The imagination consumes larger and larger chunks of life. And then one evening, on the Rue Neuve-des-Capucines, Henri Beyle collapsed and died, vanishing forever inside the behemoth known to posterity as Stendhal.

MICHAEL RAVITCH, a writer and critic living in New York City, has completed a first novel.

CORRESPONDENCE *continued from page 5*

Labor Zionism since its origins in the early twentieth century. You would think he'd manage to keep his simple-minded arguments straight.

Simple, teleological, ahistorical arguments abound here. Who can trust the wisdom of an author who posits, as he admits even in the much-sanitized summary in his letter, a distinction between societies built on the basis of "history, culture, and religion" and those predicated on "rationalism, individualism, and genuine secularism"? Did, say, the British Labor Party of the late '40s, which transformed British society and which Sternhell praises in his book at the expense of the Labor Zionists of Palestine, reconstruct Britain oblivious to "history, culture, and religions"?

Sternhell doesn't dispute the accuracy of my many citations from his book. He faults me for not quoting him still more. He challenges me to provide a reference to what he terms the "breathtaking lie" in my review regarding his assessment of the role of kibbutzim. Well, here are his words: "[T]he kibbutz served as an alibi for the whole movement, which almost from its inception was contrary to the lifestyle of an egalitarian society. The kibbutz was a kind of magnificent showcase...." Readers of the book will find many, many more similar examples of the alleged manipulation of the kibbutz by Zionist ideologues.

As for Sternhell's summary of Arlosoroff, it is simply distortion, the twisting of a thinker's ideas to fit Sternhell's preexisting grid. This impressive Zionist thinker (a courageous dove on the Arab-Jewish question, as it happens) championed egalitarianism as a goal in Jewish Palestine as part of the process of national reconstruction. He found the idea of Marxist class warfare inconceivable there in the absence of advanced capitalism.

If TNR's readers think Sternhell's reply to me reeks of sarcasm, look at his depiction of Israel's first Prime Minister, David Ben Gurion, as a spa-hopping, free-spending, left-bashing, cruel narcissist. The unprincipled, hypocritical milieu conjured up in Sternhell's fervid, extra-ordinary version of Ben Gurion's Jewish Palestine is truly that of a living hell.

TRB *continued from page 6*

Bush years, abortion was illegal in many of the countries the United States was assisting, so organizations operating there couldn't have performed abortions in the first place. Today, many of those nations have liberalized their abortion laws. In addition, the U.S. has begun funding family planning in more than a dozen new countries, like Russia, Romania, Cambodia, and South Africa, that have legalized abortion.

Furthermore, Smith's language goes well beyond the Mexico City policy. It applies not only to nongovernmental organizations but also to various other kinds of groups, including multilateral organizations. And, although Smith maintains that the provision banning activities to alter the abortion policies of foreign governments merely denies funding to groups that "lobby" on abortion, the vague language in the amendment could have far more sweeping consequences. As one USAID official puts it: "If, for instance, CARE's affiliate in Bolivia were to develop a research paper that points out that, because abortion is not legal there, many women have unsafe illegal abortions, and there is a high female mortality rate, that would be construed as calling attention to an alleged defect in Bolivia's abortion law and would therefore prevent CARE from being funded." In short, many organizations that easily complied with the Mexico City policy would no longer be eligible for U.S. funding under the Smith policy.

Smith and other pro-lifers are quick to point out that they've at least agreed to a compromise: The Smith language would allow the president to waive the ban on groups that provide abortions (though not the ban on those who "lobby" on it) in exchange for what would amount to about a $50 million cut in the funding of all family-planning activities. But this is mystifying. How can Smith and his allies, people so dedicated to saving unborn life, be so cavalier about reducing funding for family planning just to spite Clinton?

The pro-lifers are preaching, and practicing, an ethic of clean hands. Their position is tantamount to saying that it is better to risk a multitude of unwanted pregnancies and, hence, potential abortions by withholding funding from family-planning groups than to help finance even one actual abortion performed by such groups. Of course, when you put it that way, the majority of Americans might not agree.

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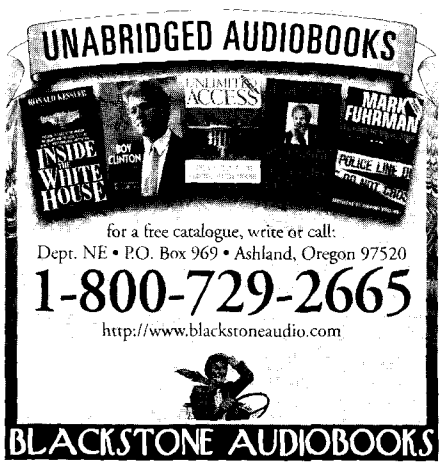

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CAMBRIDGE DIARIST

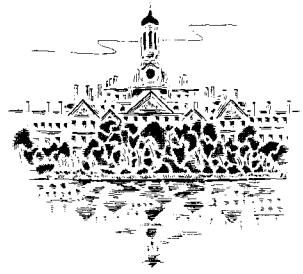
Habibie's hour

"I HAD NOT HEARD OF THE HABIBies until I had come to Indonesia," writes V.S. Naipaul in *Beyond Belief,* his just-published book of travels among the non-Arab Muslims. And I myself had not heard of B.J. Habibie until I began to read Naipaul's account of his most recent journey to these of the faithful. This at least put me two weeks ahead of everyone who found out on CNN about Habibie's elevation to the presidency of Indonesia. Since Habibie is not one of those whose tales the author actually tells, but a spectral presence in the tales of others, I had not quite grasped his centrality in contemporary Indonesia. I grasp it now.

IN INDONESIA, OF COURSE, HABIBie's ascendancy is not universally seen as a good thing. Maybe it's envy, or perhaps he's seen as not much of a change from Suharto at all. Here again is Naipaul—quoting an informant—on the family of the "great minister Habibie": "They were people whose cup overflowed. They were on a higher level altogether, impossibly blessed, beyond emulation. Habibie's brother was the ambassador to London; there were three sisters who were powerful in business; and there were all the nephews, energetic and prospering in many fields. The ideal in Indonesia was so to order one's affairs that one could extend protection to the seventh generation afterwards: if anyone (always after the president) could be said to have done that, it was the Habibies." This is the good fortune of the well-connected.

WE HAVE ALREADY MET IMADUDdin, Naipaul's first informant here, in *Among the Believers,* published in 1981. Then, he still appeared a dangerous man and an outsider. Now, he is an insider, a successful one, and his career carries the stamp of B.J. Habibie, who had become his patron. For years this patronage presumed fidelity to Suharto. Don't underestimate Suharto's achievements. David Landes tells us that in 1965 Indonesia had a lower GDP than Nigeria; in 1990, it had a GDP thrice that of Nigeria. This is the one oil state that exports more value-added manufactured goods than petroleum. To be sure, most of this productivity (sneakers and the like)—I am told by an eminent economic historian, expert in Indonesia—is attributable to the local Chinese. (*Which should not surprise:* The 30 million overseas Chinese account for more goods and services than the entire mainland China economy.) But Suharto has fallen, and fidelity will now attach to the person Imaduddin idolized in the first place: Habibie "is a genius. He's got *summa cum laude* in both master's and doctorate in Germany ... in aeronautical engineering.... He's never missed a prayer. Five times a day, and he also fasts twice a week."

HABIBIE'S ILLUMINATION, AS RE-counted by his acolyte, is that "science is something inherent in Islamic teaching. If we are backward it's because we were colonized.... It's written in the Koran. When Adam was created the first knowledge given to him by God is science." Now this is, strictly speaking, not true. It's not even true loosely speaking. Nonetheless, Habibie spread the message, through the Association of Muslim Intellectuals and through his own financially ambitious circles. The unity of faith and technology was concretely expressed in the idea that Indonesia should make airplanes, for the glory of Allah, and for the greater good of the Indonesians. Two types were made, largely from European components. The first was a commercial failure; the second is a 50-seat commuter turboprop. The launch of the N-250, whose future is dicey, took place on the anniversary of independence, for which the French government produced a fireworks display.



LANDES'S ASTONISHINGLY learned *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations* explains why some societies are inveterately oblivious to science. In Islam, in the golden age, which was 1,000 years ago, there was much scientific speculation. Nonetheless, there was almost no manifestation of this in the technologies of real life. Since then, even speculation has stopped. By way of contrast, in the West, three conventions have taken deep root. As Landes puts it, the first is the autonomy of intellectual inquiry, independent of state and clergy. The second is that weighty assertions are tested by a recognized adversarial method of proof. The third is what he calls "the invention of invention," or the institutionalization of research. Landes argues, moreover, that those countries which are far behind are likely to fall further behind. At best, the rich ones may borrow. Imaduddin told Naipaul that in Saudi Arabia there was "a very modern hospital, the King Fahd Hospital, but all the doctors, even the nurses, were non-Arab." For all its oil, Indonesia did not have the wealth to choose this option.

BUT ITS STUDENTS OUSTED THE despot and are making the succession very uncomfortable for Habibie. Of course, there is also dangerous rage against the Chinese and the Hindus. Nonetheless, this Muslim society has accomplished what no one would dare hope for Arab societies ruled by tyrants far more deserving of overthrow, tyrants who had impoverished the people they ruled rather than emboldening them. Why are the Arabs different? Fouad Ajami has been confronting this question for many years. In 1986, reviewing Ajami's book on the Lebanese Shi'a movement, *The Vanished Imam,* Edward Mortimer observed that the author's prose made him heir to Joseph Conrad and that his distinctive way of seeing made him the freest mind in contemporary Arab thought. Ajami's new book, *The Dream Palace of the Arabs,* is like one of Isaiah Berlin's intellectual histories—a meeting of genius with intractable circumstance. The book tells us how those liberating modern ideas and ideals, for which some of the region's most gifted spirits yearned, were always vanquished by the hard and tenacious myths of the past. Ajami hints that the Arab imagination may be ready "to steal away" from paralyzing entrapments like the obsession with Israel. But the fact is that the Arab Middle East is still the great exception to the democratic and free-market trends everywhere else. Suharto did not order the troops to massacre the students. That is what Saddam Hussein or Hafez Assad or Muammar Qaddafi (and even Hosni Mubarak) would have done if challenged in the streets. They won't be.

THE DREAM PALACE OF THE ARABS was reviewed admiringly almost everywhere but in the *Los Angeles Times.* The reviewer there, Edward Mortimer again, commented that, by writing so often in THE NEW REPUBLIC and by citing yours truly in the acknowledgements, Ajami had put himself beyond the pale of other Arab intellectuals. So much for the independent mind. *Sic transit Conrad.* And Mortimer? He has been retained by Kofi Annan as chief speechwriter. It will be interesting to watch the secretary-general's pronouncements for any more flattery of Saddam.

MARTIN PERETZ

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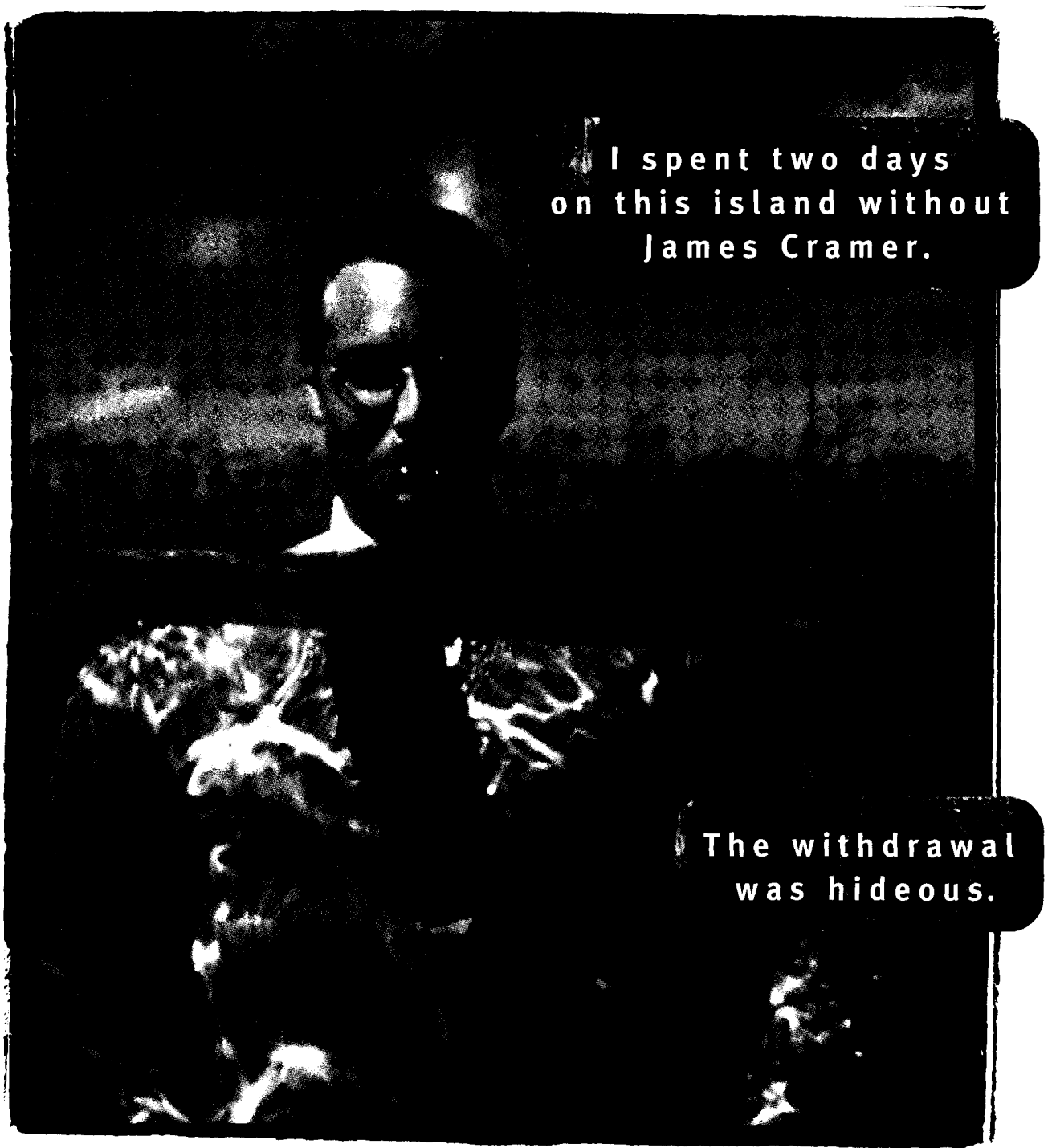

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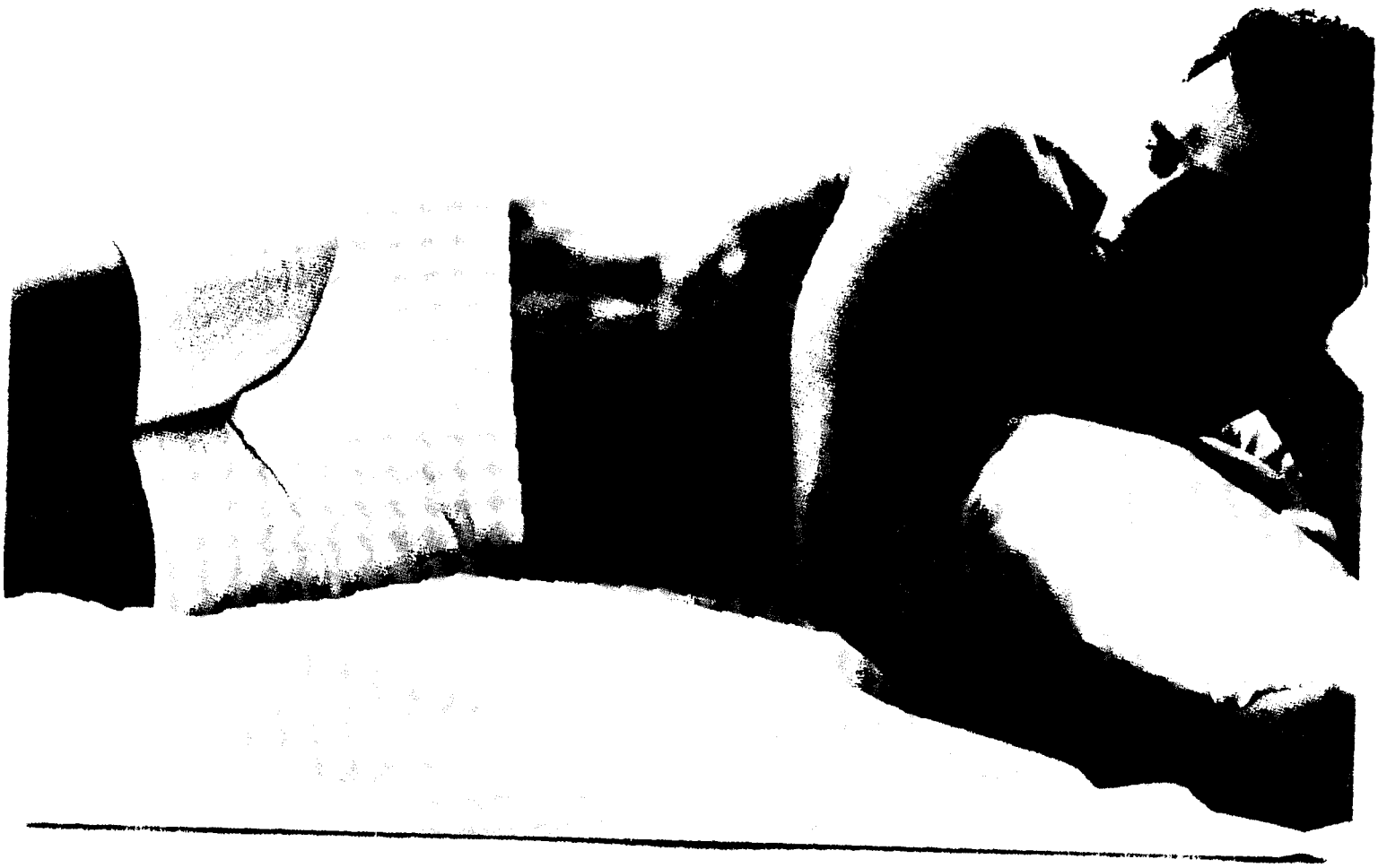

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